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BLUE VIOLETS.

BY EHEN E. BEYFORD.

I have been on the hill
Where sleep the dear ones whom we miss so much,
To see if spring had made the violets thrill
To new life, at her touch.

The snow lay here and there
In shadowy nooks where sunshine feared to go,
But where the sun had kissed the sod, and where
The grass began to grow.

I found some shy, sweet blooms
Sweet with the fragrance of a summer dead;
Or was it but the memory of perfumes
That stirred their hearts instead?

And as I gathered there
The sweet blue violets for my lonely room,
I thought, "Each blossom is a tender prayer
Breathed upward from the tomb."

For this I hold as true:
Our loved ones, when they leave us here alone,
Will still have tender thoughts for me and you,
Whose love they long have known.

And from their lowly rest
They pray for us, and every loving prayer
Becomes a flower, to blossom on their breast,
And shed its sweetness there.

And on your grave so low,
Oh, friend! a wealth of violets met my view,
And as I looked I saw a fair bud blow
To say, "I think of you!"

Ah, yes! you thought of me!
I know you heard me, when I softly said:
"Rest peacefully, and may your slumber be
Sweet in your lowly bed."

I felt a soft wind blow;
From every violet rose a fragrance rare;
An angel came, to heavenward bear, I know,
The incense of your prayer.

Kansas King: OR, THE RED RIGHT HAND.

BY BUFFALO BILL (HON. WM. F. CODY),
AUTHOR OF "DEADLY-REY, THE UN-
KNOWN SCOUT," "THE PRAIRIE
ROVER," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER X.

THE CABIN IN THE HILLS.

WHEN Red-Hand had walked away from the maiden and her father, there was a silence of several minutes; then the old man said:
"Pearl, you must not wander thus far from the retreat, in future, for my scouts bring me news of an invasion into our territory."
"Are soldiers coming into the hills, father?"
"Soldiers or citizens, they are all the same to me, and I am determined to make these hills too hot to hold them, by heaven! The man who has just left us doubtless belongs to one of these invading bands."
"Father, why is it you so hate your race? Tell me, I pray you, why you thus hide away from our own people?"
"Pearl, never dare to question my actions again," almost shrieked the old man, and then he continued:
"You have food in plenty, clothes to wear, and what more do you want?"
"Here no one molests us, and in the settlements and cities life is a continual struggle and all men are evil—ay, against all men I have a hate that will go with me to the grave."
"Girl, you know my vow, and I repeat it, that I will kill, or cause to be killed, every pale-face that comes into these hills."
"What! is there no spot where I can find seclusion from my hated race?"
Pearl gazed upon the excited face of her father with a feeling of awe, and accustomed to be wholly governed by him, she made no reply. The old man walked up to the bodies of the dead Indians and examined them attentively, after which he said:
"Pearl, these red-skins belong to the band of the young chief White Slaver—can he have ordered this attack on you?"
"I do not know, sir; but I do know they rushed upon me to make me prisoner and I fled to yonder ledge for safety, and shot two of their number. Had not the brave man who has just left us come to my rescue I would have been slain."

"Strange, very strange. Did you have any words with White Slaver when he was last at the retreat?"
"I told him I would never become his wife."
"Ha! then he it was who ordered this attack upon you. Come, girl, we must be off."
Leading the way the old man started off up the gorge, followed by the maiden, whose lovely face had become strangely moody.

After traversing a distance of several miles the man led the way up the steep hillside, and for half an hour the two climbed up the mountain, until they came to a ledge, or shelf, half an acre in size, and above which the mountain towered to a vast height.

From this ledge a grand and extensive view was had for miles and miles of country, and far below lay valleys traversed by running streams, and deep rocky canyons where it seemed hardly possible for man to go.

Against the base of the cliff, and fronting the magnificent view, was built a log cabin, constructed for both defense and comfort, for it was large and compactly put together, and the two windows commanded the only visible approach to the ledge, the one by which the old man and maiden had come.

The cabin had one door in front, and this was open, for in it sat an old Indian woman, pounding coffee in a stone jar.

rack filled with books, another upon which hung, ready for use, rifles, shot-guns, pistols and knives of various descriptions, and in the corner was a cot of bear and beaver skins.

A small door opened into the second room, which was at once noticeable for its air of neatness and comfort, for the bed was tempting in its cleanliness, and around the chamber was every indication that the fair Pearl was an ingenious and tidy housekeeper.

A curtain hung against the back of the cabin wall was raised, and this fact discovered the opening of a large cave which extended far back into the interior of the mountain.

Entering the cabin Pearl at once laid aside her rifle and accoutrements and set about aiding the Indian woman to prepare supper, while her father continued on through the rooms into the cave beyond.

As if familiar with the dark cavern he walked on with quick step for some hundred yards, the cave gradually descending, until he came out into a small valley on the other side of the hill.

A well-worn path led across the small vale, and following this the old man skirted the base of the hill, and after a further walk of a mile suddenly came upon a most picturesque scene, yet one which seemed to have no attraction for him in his then moody humor.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WHITE AND RED CHIEFS.

THE scene that met the view of the strange old man was a lovely valley spread out at his feet, for he was following a pathway that encircled, like a belt, a high hill.

Through the valley ran a winding stream, upon both banks of which were scores of Indian wigwams, through the open peaks of which the blue smoke curled lazily upward to mingle with the clouds above.

Far above, the hilltops were painted in golden colors from the setting sun, but below, the valley was cast in shadow and night was coming on apace to leave the world in darkness until another morn.

In the background of the scene, and close to the base of the hills upon either side of the valley, were hundreds of horses and cattle, grazing upon the rich grass that sprang up in wild luxuriance beneath their feet.

Here and there were visible squaws hurrying to and fro with arms full of wood brought from the forest, and lying in idleness upon the banks of the stream were lazy warriors looking upon their wives preparing the evening meal and doing all the work.

Groups of children skurried hither and thither in glee, and older ones, those youths who were aspiring to be mighty braves when their sun of manhood should rise, were swimming in the waters of the river, or practicing at targets with their bows and arrows.

It was a strange and picturesque scene, one only met with upon the frontier of our own land, and yet the old man seemed to care nothing for it—as he hurried down the steep hillside.

As he entered the camp considerable respect was shown him by the Indians he met, and yet he noticed none of them, as he bent his way toward a large lodge near the center of the encampment.

In front of this wigwam lay an Indian, reclining at length upon a bear-skin, and as the white man approached, he arose and greeted him.

He was a warrior of striking and noble ap-

pearance, one of the Cooper novel stripe of Indian braves, for his form was literally perfect, and his face almost handsome.

His attire was also far better than that usually seen among red-men, his leggings being handsomely bordered, as was also a hunting-shirt of the finest dressed deer-skin.

A coronet of gorgeously dyed feathers surmounted his head, and in his belt was stuck an ivory-handled bowie-knife, a tomahawk, ingeniously carved, and a revolver, while by his side lay a silver-mounted rifle.

"The White Slaver is glad to see the Gray Chief; will he enter the wigwam of his red brother?" and the young warrior spoke with a dignity and politeness that seemed natural to him.

"No, the White Slaver is false to me. Why did he attempt to carry the Pearl of my heart from her cabin home?" angrily replied the white man, whom the Indians called the Gray Chief.

A flush stole into the red face of the young chief at the charge, and for a moment he was silent, but then said earnestly:

"The heart of the White Slaver is not here in his bosom, but with the pale-face maiden on the hill. She is the dewdrop that refreshes his life, and yet she turns her eyes from the White Slaver, though he is the chief of his tribe."

"All true, chief; but, did you expect to win the girl by force?"

"Could the White Slaver use his arm toward the Pearl of the Hills?" indignantly said the Indian.

"And yet you sent five of your braves to take the Pearl captive?"

"Would the Gray Chief trifle with White Slaver, or does he speak with a false tongue?" said the chief, and glancing into the Indian's face, the old man read there only truth, and felt that he had not ordered the violence done Pearl.

Then in a few words he told the young chief all that had occurred, and with a surprised frown the White Slaver heard him through.

Then he said:

"The young men who thus acted toward the Pearl of the Hills were squaw braves, and they deserved their fate."

"White Slaver knows who has done this wrong to the Pearl, and he shall make his knife drink his blood for it; but, Gray Chief, the pale-faces must not come into our land—no, they must be swept back upon the prairies."

"Ha! that is my humor, White Slaver, and I am glad to see you are of the same mind."

"Now listen to me: scouts have brought news that there are two bands of pale-faces marching into our hills, and I wish you to assemble your warriors and prepare them for the war-path."

"Do not act in haste, for those men come here to remain, take my word for it; and we can bide our time, and so lay our plans that not one pale-face shall ever tread the prairie sward again."

"The Gray Chief hates his people," quietly said the chief.

"Hate! I abhor, I curse them; and, White Slaver, when the scalp of the last man of these bands hangs upon yonder war-pole, I promise you that the Pearl of the Hills shall gladden your wigwam with her presence."

The eyes of White Slaver glittered with joy, but he said quietly:
"It shall be as the Gray Chief says: in one moon there shall be five hundred warriors

upon the war-path of the pale-faces. White Slaver has said it."

"Ay, chief, and, let me tell you, that a great foe to your people is in yonder valley—a man before whom your stoutest warriors tremble, for I saw him."

"The Sioux warriors never fly from a foe; they know no fear," proudly returned the chief.

"And yet I have seen Sioux braves, who, when a score in number, dared not face that man."

"It was he who slew the five warriors in the gorge to-day," and Gray Chief determined not to let White Slaver know that Pearl had sent two of his young men to the happy hunting-grounds.

"Who is this great brave?" asked the chief, with considerable interest.

"The Red-Hand Scout."

In spite of himself the young chief flinched at the name, and his eagle eye glanced quickly around the surrounding hills, rapidly darkening before the approach of night.

"The Red-Hand is a great brave; but his scalp will yet be taken," replied White Slaver, with the braggadocio spirit natural to the red-skin.

"See that it is. Now I will back to my home in the hills, for I like not your low-lands, chief," and so saying, the old man walked rapidly back the way he had come, his thoughts too busy to bestow more than a passing glance down upon the Indian village, now hidden in gloom, excepting here and there where a camp-fire glimmered in front of some wigwam, whose lord had been late in returning to the bosom of his red family, and where the patient squaw was busy in preparing his supper.

After a rapid walk Gray Chief reached his cabin, and found an humble, but substantial repast awaiting him, after partaking of which he lighted his brier-wood pipe, and repaired to the ledge to smoke and think over the murderous plan he had laid for the destruction of those of his own race.

CHAPTER XII.

AN UNPLEASANT DISCOVERY.

THE discovery, made by the two scouts, and which betokened no good to the band of pale-face invaders into the Black Hills, was one that certainly caused them considerable uneasiness regarding the women and children of Captain Ramsey's party.

Returning from a hunt one morning, some three weeks after the coming to the Black Hills, Tom Sun beheld the form of a man bounding along the ridge of a high range of hills.

A closer inspection proved that it was Red-Hand, and that he was in rapid chase of some object was evident.

At first Tom Sun believed it was a deer he was anxious to get a shot at, when he suddenly beheld the scout drop on one knee and rapidly his rifle was raised to his shoulder, while once, twice, thrice the flame burst from the muzzle, and the ringing reports echoed down the glen.

"Red-Hand never shoots three times at a deer—no, there goes another shot; and, another—he's on an Injun's trail," said Tom Sun, and quickly he bounded up the steep hill to the relief of his friend.

Ere he reached the spot, Red-Hand suddenly darted back along the ridge, and discovering Tom Sun, shouted to him in ringing tones:

"Come, Tom! for your life, come!"
Urged by the earnest manner of his brother-scout, Tom Sun dashed rapidly along the hill, and the two friends were soon together.

"Injuns!" simply said Tom Sun, in an inquiring tone.

"Worse, than that," replied Red-Hand, as the two ran rapidly along the ridge, side by side.

"The devil!"

"No, not the devil himself, but a band of his imps."

"You've got me, Red-Hand—not Injuns, or the devil, but some of his imps; they must be wicked fellows to cause you to make such time," and Tom Sun glanced over his shoulder as the two ran along.

"I refer to Kansas King's outlaws," suddenly said Red-Hand, as the two reached the valley and wheeled into a deep canyon in the hills.

Tom Sun stopped short, and turned his full gaze upon his companion, while he said, earnestly:

"Do you mean it! Has Kansas King and his outlaws come into these hills?"

"I tell you the truth, as you will see, if they pursue me, as doubtless they will, for I left them some of their comrades to avenge."

"Doubt! it is a way you have," dryly returned Tom, and then he continued:

"Tell us about it. How did you first discover it?"

"I was returning to camp, and from the ridge above discovered a line of horsemen filing along the valley, and at once ran, to get a view of them, to the end of the hill."

"I saw you making tracks, and thought you were after a deer."

"No, I was after different game."

"When I reached the hill-top I saw the head of the column, and soon over forty of the band came in sight, riding Indian file, and between two of them was none other than Lone Dick, the old trapper."

"Bagged him, have they?"

"Yes, but I think he got away, for I sent a few shots into their midst which certainly did them no good, and I saw Lone Dick make a break down the gulch; if he didn't get away, it was not his fault."

"Then you put back down the ridge?"

"Yes, I saw a dozen start toward the hill, and I thought it best to fall back rapidly."

"You did it, too; but the devils will not come down here, so we had better wait awhile and then scout round and see what is to be done."

"We will go to the glen, now, and see if they have left. I do not wish them to see me, or you, and perhaps we can circumvent any of their plans; but what can have brought Kansas King into these hills?"

"He's had some hot brushes lately with the troops, you know, and he may have come up here to rest his men and horses, and at the same time look for a nest-egg in the shape of plunder from our bands; he certainly did not come here to fight Sioux."

"Not he; no, he has other game. Come."

So saying, Red-Hand peered cautiously out from the canyon, and then led the way once more along the ridge of the hill, in the direction of the spot where he had knelt and fired upon the outlaw column.

Arriving at the place, all seemed quiet in the glen—yes, the quietude of death rested there, for several human forms lay, face downward, upon the sward, lying where they had fallen when tumbled from their saddles by the unerring aim of Red-Hand.

"By Heaven, Tom, I verily believe they skedaddled after my fire, and were as anxious to get out of the way as I was."

"You bet they were not pining to remain; but, with Kansas King at their head, his men seldom make tracks."

"No, but he was not at their head—at least I did not see him, though I recognized his lieutenant."

"Bad Burke?"

"Yes."

"May the devil fly away with that imp! he is worse than Kansas King, for he has not a single redeeming trait, and when a fellow is as bad as that, I think he is deserted by God, man, and the devil."

"You are right, Tom; Bad Burke is a vile creature, and I wish I had him in length of my rifle; but, come—let us go down into the glen."

"It's risky business, for we have no cover, and might be called to pass in our checks by some fellow hidden behind a rock."

"True, Tom; but my creed is that one time to die is just as good as another, though of course it behooves us to protect our lives all in our power; but come, we must down into the glen, and then we'll strike the trail of the outlaws and see where their lay-out is, and find out what brought them into these hills."

So saying, Red-Hand moved over the hill-top, and Tom Sun instantly following, the two scouts descended into the valley, upon which rested the shadow of death.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE "HOWLD SOBER BOY."

CAUTIOUSLY, and with restless, searching eyes, the two scouts descended the hill and soon reached the bottom of the glen, when they beheld a sight, which to one unaccustomed to a wild life on the border, amid scenes of carnage and death, would have been a sad spectacle.

Near the base of the hill lay a gallant gray steed, motionless in death, and still saddled

and bridled, while a pool of blood was beneath his head.

Further on a few yards, writhing in the agony of a broken leg, was a bay mare, her earnest eyes turning imploringly upon the two scouts, as if begging them with mute glance to put her out of misery.

Up to this animal Red-Hand stepped; his knife was drawn from its sheath, and then the bright blade was driven into the heart of the noble beast, while with a sigh, the Scout said, feelingly:

"Poor thing! it is a pity to have you suffer for the sins of your master."

Not ten feet from the mare—who sunk back with an almost human groan when the Scout drove his knife to her heart—lay a man prone upon his face.

He was a burly fellow, attired in a suit half military, half citizen, and upon his feet were a pair of cavalry boots.

His head was wedged into his hat, which the Scout removed as he turned him upon his back, the act displaying a man of red hair and beard.

The face was that of a common mortal, cruel and brutal, and a ragged wound in his side proved the shot of Red-Hand from the hill had gone straight to the seat of life and torn it from its clayey throne.

Around a bend in the glen, and presenting the appearance of having been dragged there by his steed, was a wounded man, supporting himself against a rock, and gazing upon the approaching scouts with an expression that was irresistibly laughable, in spite of the seriousness of the situation.

His clothes were bedraggled with dirt, his face scratched, and his short sandy hair stood on end, while one foot was bare of a boot, proving that he had been dragged by his stirrup until the boot had come off.

His attire was a strange mixture of the hunter's garb, Indian costume, and a soldier's and citizen's wardrobe combined, and the front of his jacket was stained with blood, while both hands were pressed upon his right side in the manner of some love sick swain swearing entire heartfelt devotion to his lady-love.

A belt of leather encircled the aldermanic waist of this worthy, and upheld an old cavalry sabre and a large horse-pistol.

"Well, sir, what have you to say for yourself?" said Red-Hand, approaching, and repressing a smile at the strange appearance of the man.

In a voice that at once betrayed the nationality of the individual, he replied:

"Och, comrade, I'm kilt intirely, am I; bad luck to soger in this blessed country."

"Soldiering! are you a soldier?"

"And faith, does yez take me for a dishonest man?"

"I take you for just what you are—an outlaw."

"Oh, mither of the holy Moses! an outlaw, is it, I am! St. Patrick and the twelve apostles be after preserving me if I was one of those miserable murdering varmits," and the son of Erin raised his hands in horror at the thought.

"Now, look here, Paddy—"

"Michael is my name, yer honor, Michael Mullaney—"

"Well, Paddy or Mikey, either one will look well on your tombstone. You must not lie to me; you are a member of Kansas King's band!"

"Oh, holy mither! yer honor is joking with me. Why, it is meself that is a howling soger."

"Much soldier you are," put in Tom Sun, with a motion toward his neck with a knife, and Red-Hand continued:

"Now, look here, Paddy—"

"Michael, yer honor."

"Well, Michael, you belong to the outlaw band of Kansas King, and I know it, for I fired the shot that sent you from your horse; strange my aim was not truer."

"Truer! truer, is it? Howly Moses, but it's killin' me, it is," and the Irishman groaned as if in terrible pain.

"No, it has merely cut the flesh and will do you no harm," and Red-Hand examined the wound which had grazed a rib, and thus was the bullet turned from its search for life.

"Ochone! bad luck to you, Michael Mullaney, for not finding out yerself that yez wasn't kilt, and then paddlin' them same legs of yours out of this," and Michael looked with anger upon himself.

"Well, you are a prisoner now, and I wish you to tell me the truth; are you not a member of Kansas King's band of outlaws?" and Red-Hand looked sternly into the face of the man before him, who still continued seated upon the ground, and pressing his hands tightly upon his wounded side.

Promptly the Irishman replied:

"I was after being in company wid the robbers, yer honor, bad luck to thim; but yez see I was their prisoner."

"Their prisoner! You were not one of the band, then?"

"Holy mither forbid."

"What were you before they took you prisoner?"

"I was after bein' a prisoner to the Injuns, yer honor."

"Where were you captured by the Indians, and how long ago?"

"Six moons ago, yer honor, I was captured by Little Big Man."

"It is strange that chief did not kill you, Michael."

"Yis, yer honor."

"Now, mind you, I want the truth; where were you before the Indians took you?"

"In jail in North Platte, sir."

"Why were you in jail?"

"I had borrowed a horse, yer honor, and was after fergittin' to return 'im."

"And before you stole the horse, Michael?"

"I was a bould soger, sir, at the fort."

"Were you discharged, Michael?"

"I was after discharging meself, sir."

"You deserted?"

"No, sir; I was after going to slape on the road-side, and the rigimint wint on and deserted me."

"I understand; now before you were a soldier what was your occupation?"

"Diggin' praties, in ould Ireland, God bless her, sir."

"Well, Michael, it seems you have had a checkered career, which accounts for your variegated wardrobe of citizen, army, Indian and outlaw costume; now tell me, how was it you joined Kansas King's band?"

"I was after joining meself, yer honor, for yez see I was in the Injun camp, and they claned the red varmits out and tuk me, sir."

"All right; now, Tom, what shall we do with this wicked man?" and Red-Hand turned to his companion with an approach to humor on his face.

"He is a very bad man, and has been Irish farmer, American citizen, horse-thief, deserter from the army, big Injun and outlaw; but let me ask him one question before we sentence him to death."

"Oh, Lord!" groaned Michael, in terror, as Tom Sun turned to him and said, in deep tones:

"Paddy McGinnis—"

"Michael Mullaney, sur—"

"Hang Michael Mullaney! Paddy McGinnis is the name I intend to put on your tombstone."

"Howly Moses! is it kill me yez will do, and thin put the wrong name above me bones! Och, sure, and St. Patrick will niver find me at the day of judgment—"

"Well, the devil will, Paddy McGinnis; now, answer me, sir: Were you ever a United States Congressman or Senator?"

"No, yer honor; it's wicked I am, but I was never that same," earnestly replied the son of Erin.

"Again, sir: were you ever a New York politician?" continued Tom Sun.

"Niver, sur, niver! Howly Moses protect me from bein' such a vile creatur."

"Then he is not as bad as we believed, so we had better spare his life, Red-Hand."

"Rid-Hand! Rid-Hand, is it? Howly mither protect me, for I'm dead intirely now," cried the Irishman, turning his eyes upon the stained hand of the Scout, whose face flushed slightly as he stepped forward and said in strangely kind tones:

"Michael, I have seen you before, both in the army and when you were in the Indian camp, and though you have been in bad company I do not think you so wicked but that you can be redeemed."

"Come, my man, let me dress your wound, and then you must tell us all about Kansas King and his band, why they came to these hills, their numbers, where they are encamped, and all we would know."

"It's meself that wishes yer honor miny blessings, and I'll be after tilling you ivery-thing yez would know," and a joyous look came into the face of poor Michael, for he felt that for the present his life was safe, and about the future he cared but little.

CHAPTER XIV.

EXTEMPORIZING A SPY.

A few moments passed and Michael found his wounds carefully dressed by Red-Hand, while Tom Sun was making an examination of the body of the dead outlaw.

"Here, Paddy, you are one of the same family, so I guess you are heir to them," and Tom Sun threw the Irishman a purse of money, and beg of trinkets he had taken from his slain companion.

Paddy, as the scouts insisted upon calling him, pocketed the things, and then said:

"Now, yer honors, what would yez have me after tellin' yez?"

"First, how many men has Kansas King with him here in this mountain?" asked Red-Hand.

"Forty-seven men, includin' yonder dead spalpeen and meself that isn't dead at all, though bad luck to the chafe, he thinks I am."

"Forty-five men, then: was the chief with you 'o-day?"

"No, sur, he was down in the valley beyond the hill."

"How far from here?"

"Five miles about, sur."

"Is he encamped there?"

"Yes, sur."

"How long since?"

"We was after bein' there since last night, sur."

"Did you come to the hills right from the prairie?"

"Yis, sur; the sogers made us git away."

"And Kansas King came here for protection?"

"Yis, sur, and—"

"And what?"

"He was after knowin' that some emigrants had come up hereabouts, and he wanted to take their plunder."

"And it was to rob the emigrant band, and to fly from the troops, that he came?"

"Yis, sur, and to get the purty darter of Captain Ramsey, for he has taken a shine for the gal."

"Aha! that is his game! Did he not intend to establish a stronghold here, too?"

"Faith, and I believe sich was his intin-tion, sur, for he was after wantin' to see the big Injun chief they call White Slayer."

"I thought as much: it has been rumored that he intended to try and form an alliance with the Indians of the Black Hills," said Red-Hand, addressing Tom Sun.

Then again turning to the Irishman, he continued:

"Paddy, you will go with me to my camp, and if you will behave yourself like a Christian, no harm will befall you, and in time you will become an honorable member of Irish society; but you know me—"

"Yis, sur."

"Well, you know I keep my word, and that I will track you to death if you deceive me, if I have to trail you to old Ireland—"

"It's yerself that's the man to do that same."

"Now, listen to me: I intend to take you into my service: if you do as I will, I will reward you; if to the contrary, I will kill you."

"Oh, Moses!"

"You are able to walk now, are you not?"

"I could dance at a wake, yer honor."

"Well, come with me to my camp, and then I wish you to return to the outlaw encampment, and gain from Kansas King all the information you can regarding his movements. If he meets White Slayer, or has any communication with any one in these hills, return and let me know."

"I will do that same, sur."

"Good: now, Tom, we are for camp, and I advise you to let Captain Ramsey know what is before him, and have all on the alert."

"There is trouble ahead, I feel confident, and if the captain will bring his party over to our camp so much the better, for it is more securely situated than his post, and we will need all our forces together, for I very much fear we will have both Indians and outlaws to fight."

"You are right, Red-Hand, and I will place the matter before him: in fact he must, for the present, take refuge in your camp."

"So I would urge: now, Paddy, if, when you go back to camp, the trapper is still a prisoner, try and get him away, if you can."

"I will, sur; but he's a devil's own cub to fight," said the Irishman.

"How was it you caught Lone Dick?" asked Tom Sun.

"Yer see, sur, he was a diggin' in a hole in the ground, and we come upon him, and Bad Burke, the lieutenant, says he, 'drag him out, boys.'"

"So, out we drags him by the heels, and, saints preserve us, but he kicked like a young mule, and it was a hard time we had puttin' the straps on him."

"Do you think he escaped when I fired upon your line?"

"Lord love yer honor, I was after bein' occupied meself at the time, and didn't observe the vagabonds."

"Very well, Paddy, now come."

A few words more and the party separated—Tom Sun taking the way over the hills toward his camp, and Red-Hand and the Irishman, after burying the dead outlaw, going down the glen toward the stronghold, where, upon their arrival, Paddy came in for a fair butt for the rest of the gay and reckless miners, who criticized freely his wonderful wardrobe, and asked him innumerable questions—for all of which he had a prompt reply.

Convinced that he could fully trust the Irishman, Red-Hand gave him a square meal, and a pull at his brandy-flask, after which he again went over his instructions to him, and Paddy departed upon his duty, as a spy in the camp where a short while before he had been an acknowledged comrade.

With a virtuous look creeping over his face, Paddy left the stronghold, accompanied by the Scout, who, after escorting him a few miles on his way, left him to go on alone, while he turned off into the hills that encircled the Indian village of White Slayer, the young chief of the wild Sioux.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 315.)

OUR WOMEN.

What is the theme that now I sing,
With rattling bones and banjo's ring,
While tambourine aloft I fling?
Our Women!

Who they that, in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy and hard to please,
Through life's tight places men do squeeze
Our Women!

Who smile when favorite china breaks?
Who take the toposmost buckwheat cakes?
Who nurse the baby when it wakes?
Our Women!

Who drop the needle for the pen,
And make the echoes ring again,
To wake those stupid things, the men?
Our Women!

Who kindled the Centennial flame,
In distant States, where, dull and tame,
The men forgot their country's fame?
Our Women!

Who, when the men, in blank dismay,
Sat wondering if the thing would pay,
Pulled back their skirts and led the way?
Our Women!

Who stormed old Independence Hall,
To build their houses, and put to flight
With sixty-thousand-power call?
Our Women!

Who, when Centennial stock was low,
Did bravely take their books and go,
And begged a share from every bow?
Our Women!

Who leave the cradle and the tub?
Who coax papa and wheedle hub,
Unheeding jest and gibe and snub?
Our Women!

Who worked all day and talked all night,
To build their houses, and put to flight
The fools who sneer at Woman's Right?
Our Women!

Who waked the days of Washington,
Contriving fete and fair and fun,
While Polly puts the kettle on?
Our Women!

Who, in the loveliest array,
Turn work Centennial into play,
And gather money every day?
Our Women!

Who, when the days of toil were long;
When 'neath the burden bowed the strong,
Still cheered the faint with buoyant song?
Our Women!

And sung that lay that no man wrote:
"Forever shall our banner float,
Our oriflamme, the Petticoat!"
Our Women!

Who, when Centennial days are o'er,
And Patriotisms asks no more,
Will be the things we most adore?
Our Women!

FERGUS FEARNIGHT;

Our New York Boys.

A STORY OF THE BY-WAYS AND THOROUGHFARES.

BY GEORGE L. AIKEN,

AUTHOR OF "FALSE FACES," "ROY, THE RECKLESS," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.

A HIGH OLD TIME.

FLEDA attended to her business, as she called it, in a very absent manner after she had arranged her stand and wares at the customary corner.

She had been there about a quarter of an hour without having a customer, when her attention was attracted by the sound of boisterous laughter, and she saw Rowdy Rube, Johnny the Chicken, and Terry coming along the sidewalk toward her, but so changed in their appearance that she rubbed her eyes surprisedly, and wondered if it really could be they.

Each one of them was dressed in a new summer suit, and wore a calico shirt of a variegated pattern, with a fancy necktie, of a high color, and a new straw hat; and each one held a cigar in the corner of his mouth, with the nonchalance of an old smoker, with this difference, as Terry was the shortest boy he had contrived to get the longest cigar.

"Oh, my!" murmured Fleda to herself, as she perceived them. "Ain't they just a-goin' it! Clint Stuyvesant won't get much of his money back, I'm afraid."

The trio paused in front of Fleda's stand, and saluted her boisterously.

"Gimme a pint o' peanuts!" piped Terry, in his shrill treble. "I don't want no trust, neither."

He displayed a handful of change as he spoke.

"Let's buy her out—give the gal a lift!" cried Rowdy Rube.

"Won't take much to do that," said the Chicken. "Help yourselves, boys, and I'll stand the damage."

He also made a display of money, flourishing several bank-bills.

"Seems to me you are flush to-day," remarked Fleda. "And I know what has made you so," she told herself, but she was careful not to let them know it.

"You bet we are!" exclaimed Terry, jubilantly. "We're jist a havin' a high old time of it. We went to the Bowery Theater last night, and jist seen sights. Crickeel you oughter have been there. Warn't it prime?" he added, appealing to the Chicken.

"Bang-up!" responded that youth.

"Splendiferous!" exclaimed Rowdy Rube. "There was a little gal that danced there, just about your size, Fleda, and she had on wings like a butterfly."

"Did she?" asked Fleda, absently.

She was thinking to herself if there was any way to get lawyer Pickles and Clinton Stuyvesant on the track of these young reprobates, for it was evident to her that they had missed them.

The boys began to fill their pockets with Fleda's wares, vociferously demanding the damage as they did so. They cleaned her stand, and paid her the price she demanded without cavil; three princes of the blood royal could not have dispensed their money with a freer hand.

"Now you can go home," piped Terry, who seemed to be in a particularly happy frame of mind; "and don't say we never did nuthin' for yer."

"Oh, if I only knew where to find the lawyer and Clint!" thought Fleda, perplexedly. Then a new idea came suddenly into her brain. "Perhaps they know where Fergus is!" This reflection was instantly acted upon. "When did you see Fergus last?" she questioned, addressing the question in a general manner to the whole three.

"Why, don't yer know?" returned Terry. "Hain't yer heard?"

"What?" rejoined Fleda, gaspingly.

"He's sent up!" cried Rowdy Rube, exultingly. "He won't get another chance to punch my head for some time to come."

Fleda looked, in a dismayed manner, from one boy's face to another, and both the Chicken and Terry nodded a confirmation of Rowdy Rube's words.

"Sent up?" stammered Fleda. "Oh! what do you mean? Sent up where?"

"To Blackwell's Island!" answered Terry, lugubriously.

"What for?"

"Fer fightin' with Mickey Shea down on the pier at Dover street. A cop came up an' grabbed Ferg, but the other coves scooted, an' got away; an' Ferg was carried to the station house, an' tuck to the Tombs in der mornin', an' der judge sent him up. That's what Archie Quale told me, and he seed Ferg tuck in."

Terry delivered this account volubly.

"Oh, the lawyer and Clint must know this right away," murmured Fleda, and she began a hurried arrangement of her stand for removal.

"Goin' to shut up shop?" inquired Terry.

"Yes; you've bought me out."

"Lay in a fresh supply," suggested Rowdy Rube.

"Not to-day; I have something else to do. Oh, I only wish I knew where they were going!" she added to herself. Then she cunningly put the question:

"Where are you going now, boys?"

"Where are we goin'?" replied Rowdy Rube, in a manner that indicated that they had no particular destination before them.

"Blest if I know! What's the next thing on the peppergram?" he asked his comrades.

The Chicken was silent; his brain was not fertile in ideas.

Terry displayed a readier wit.

"Let's go to der Atlantic Garden an' have some lager bier and Switzer kase," he said.

"That's a go!" answered Rowdy Rube, approvingly.

"I'm convenient," added the Chicken.

The trio locked arms and walked away, swaggering along the sidewalk in a ludicrous manner.

"Oh, if they will only stop there long enough for me to find the lawyer and Clint, and send them there!" muttered Fleda to herself, as she hurried home with her stand.

She deposited it in the house, gave her mother a hurried account of what she had heard, to her great surprise and grief, and then went in search of lawyer Pickles and Clinton Stuyvesant.

Knowing that they would go to the Dover street pier, she thought her best plan would be to proceed there at once.

Fleda was fleet of foot, and she soon reached Chatham street. As she paused on the corner of Pearl street, waiting for the vehicles to pass and give her an opportunity of crossing, she saw Pickles and Clinton Stuyvesant coming up Pearl street on the opposite side.

With a glad cry, and at the risk of being run over by a horse car, she bounded across the street, and ran to them, crying out:

"Oh, here you are! I've found you—oh, I'm so glad!"

"Fledda!" ejaculated Clinton, surprisedly.

"What, my dark-eyed darling?" cried Pickles. "Are you looking for us? What is the newest grief? Another screw got out of place, eh?"

all three boys started to their feet with alacrity.

"Hold on!" commanded Pickles.

"Eh?"

"Tarry yet a little, there is something else." The three boys exchanged apprehensive glances.

"Wot is it?" inquired Terry.

"You told the little girl that keeps the peanut-stand something about Fergus, surnamed the Fearnought?"

"We didn't do nuffin to him! It was Mickey Shea, Archie Quale, and der rest on 'em!" cried Terry, quickly.

"That's so," chimed in Rube and the Chick-en.

"Then he really has been sent to the Island?" "Yes," the Black Maria tuck him away this morning.

"That will do. You can go."

The boys availed themselves of this permission in quite a hasty manner. Evidently they had a great dread of the little lawyer.

Pickles took a refreshing draught from his mug of lager. Then he set it down, and pushed the money and portmanteau toward Clinton.

"There's your property, Mr. Stuyvesant," he said. "It is not a very brilliant recovery, still it might have been worse."

"Indeed it might!" answered Clinton. "I never expected to see my portmanteau again, and I felt rather bad about it, as it was a birthday present from my mother."

"Ah, yes! such souvenirs have a value beyond their intrinsic worth," rejoined Pickles, feelingly; and he finished the contents of his mug.

"Happy to have been the means of restoring it to you, my young friend."

"You may as well take your fee out now."

Pickles took the money, folded it up deliberately, put it in the portmanteau, and closed the spring.

"My young friend," he said, in that smiling and genial manner he so much affected, "if I were to emulate the example of many of my legal brothers, who are considered distinguished professors of the law, I should take the money and give you back the portmanteau; but my fingers are not so sticky; they do allow something to pass through them sometimes. No, my young friend, no! I have—to use a homely phrase—a soul above buttons! There's your portmanteau, and my charge is—nix!"

Clinton laughed as he received it.

"You're an odd genius!" he exclaimed.

Pickles nodded his head complacently.

"You are right, my young friend—scion of the Stuyvesants, you hit the right nail on the head *that* time; I am a genius!" he replied.

"Odd or even, the world will yet acknowledge that Effingham H. Pickles has genius, and the snowy ermine of a judge's robe will sit gracefully upon his shoulders. But—something too much of this, eh, ah! 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' As the Scotch say, 'We must be gangin'.'"

Pickles arose, and Clinton followed his example.

"Are you going to try and get Fergus off the Island?" he inquired, as they walked toward the door leading into the street.

"Instantly! I shall release that bold youth from durance vile not perhaps in the exaggerated time designated as the 'twinkling of a bed-post,' but with all possible speed."

"I'm sure it's very kind of you."

"Perhaps it is," responded Pickles, somewhat ambiguously.

"You ought to have something for your trouble."

"I expect to."

"Ah! who from?"

Pickles chuckled, and winked hard with his left eye. Then he placed the forefinger of his right hand on the side of his nose in an impressive manner.

"Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be instructed," he responded.

This mysterious intimation bewildered Clinton.

"What do you mean by that?"

"There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy, Horatio!" replied Pickles, with another quotation.

"I think I shall draw a large fee for my exertions in behalf of the bold Fergus."

"The Hesperian trees nod their rich clusters at me, and I think somebody's coming down handsomely with the dust."

These words brought them to the corner of Canal street, where they paused.

Clinton extended his hand to the little lawyer with, "Say, old fellow, do you know I rather like you?"

Pickles grasped the proffered hand cordially.

"Delighted to hear it, Stuyvesant, junior—delighted!" he rejoined. "Should the cares of life at any time involve you in litigation I shall be glad to serve you in a professional capacity. Pray accept of one of my cards."

"When this you see, remember me, eh, hah, ah! Ta, ta!"

And Pickles walked away with a consequential carriage of the head, as if the majesty of the law frowned from the brim of his hat upon all whom he encountered.

"Well, he's the queerest customer I ever met with!" was Clinton's conclusion. Seeing a Third Avenue car coming he boarded it and went homeward.

Pickles walked swiftly toward his office, and was very much surprised to see a lady standing in the doorway when he reached there.

This lady was dressed in a plain, dark walking suit, had on a black straw hat, from which depended a thick, green veil, which was drawn over her face, utterly concealing her features.

"Hum!" murmured Pickles, and his keen eyes surveyed her critically. "Here's a client for somebody; I wonder if it is for me! A lady, evidently, but does not wish to be known. Ah, hum, hah!"

Pickles raised his hat politely to the lady in the green veil, and with great gravity said:

"You appear to be looking for some one, madam?"

"I am," she responded. "A lawyer by the name of Pickles. Perhaps you could tell me where I could find him?"

"I can. Ecce homo—behold the man!"

"You are the gentleman?"

"The identical."

"This is very fortunate!"

"Extremely so—ex-treme-ly! You wish to consult me?"

"I do."

"Very good. This way, if you please, madam; my office is on the first floor."

"Yes, I was up there."

"But not finding me in—"

"I thought I would await your return here."

"Ah! very urgent to see me," Pickles muttered to himself as he led the way to his room.

"Some relative or friend of hers has got into trouble, I'll wager. Well, I'm the man to get him out again. 'He can, if any man can.' Here we are, please enter, madam."

He ushered her into his office, which was a great deal neater in appearance than the exterior of the building would have led any one to suppose, and placed a seat for her.

Pickles took a seat on the other side of the table opposite her, and assumed his most affable expression. He was conscious that a pair of very bright eyes were studying his appearance curiously through the meshes of the green veil.

"Suspicious," he told himself. "But that's only natural." Then addressing himself to her, he inquired:

"Pray, madam, what can I do for you?"

"I hardly know how to break the business that brought me here to you," she answered, hesitatingly.

"Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break," he suggested encouragingly.

This quotation appeared to bewilder her.

"Sorrow?" she cried, in a suspicious way.

"Why should you imagine that I had a sorrow?"

"Most people have, and it would be odd if you hadn't," he answered. "Some friend of yours in trouble, eh?"

"Yes, a very dear friend—not in the trouble that you probably imagine, but still in a position from which I would extricate him."

Pickles chuckled in a subdued manner.

"Him? Ah! it's a man, then?" he said.

"Yes—a youth—"

Pickles sat bolt upright in his chair.

"Fergus Fearnought?" he interrupted, suddenly.

"Yes—yes—it is he!"

"Ah! I know who you are now, my lady, but I must not frighten you," Pickles admitted to himself. "Did Mr. Rufus Glendenning send you here?" he inquired.

"No, no!" she answered, vehemently. "And he must not be told that I have been here."

These agitated words puzzled Pickles, but he rejoined promptly: "He will never know it from me, madam, if such is your desire."

"It is—it is!" She was silent for a moment, and then resumed earnestly: "Oh! if I thought I could trust you!"

The lawyer was touched by this plaintive appeal. There was one soft place left in his heart which the law had not been able to harden.

"You must trust me, madam, if I am to do you any good," he replied. "If you do not, I cannot. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*—nothing comes of nothing. I know it is a difficult thing to tell you who you can trust in this world, but we all have to take risks, like a life insurance company. And it isn't easy to pick your friends, either. A dwarf is not to be despised, for he may have a giant for his friend, and so be master of a giant's strength. Give me your confidence."

Pickles made this quotation probably as alluding to his own diminutive size. His manner impressed Loriania favorably—the reader has conjectured who the veiled lady was of course.

"You have been employed by Rufus Glendenning to make certain inquiries about a boy who is known as Fergus Fearnought?" she said.

"Yes, madam, I have," was the prompt reply.

"Have you any idea what his *motive* was in urging you to these inquiries?"

"Not the slightest."

"He did not tell you?"

"He did not."

Loriania's manner indicated some disappointment.

"Did you think—had you any reason to believe—that he knew the boy's true name and birth?" she resumed.

"He assured me that he did not."

"But did you believe him? You are no fool—your face tells me that!" Pickles placed his right hand over his heart and bowed his acknowledgments. "What conclusion have you arrived at in the matter?"

"Hum!" began Pickles, with a dry cough, in answer. "I will be frank with you."

"You will find it to your interest to be so."

Pickles waved his right hand in a deprecating manner.

"I make no doubt of that, madam; no doubt of that! Mr. Glendenning was attached to the boy, whom we met accidentally in the street, by a resemblance to some friend—or acquaintance—of his, and he became very anxious to know all about the boy, and I instituted inquiries accordingly."

"And what did you discover?"

"Precious little. I learned that he was called Fergus Fearnought—this last name being given on account of the spice of dare-devil in his nature, and a pretty strong spice it is, too—and that he lived with a poor widow and her daughter, whose name is Nandrus, in one of those wretched tenement houses on Baxter street, and that he did odd jobs about the street for a living."

"Well?" cried Loriania, who had been an attentive listener.

"That was all I could tell Mr. Glendenning then, but now I could tell him much more."

"You must not!" she exclaimed, imperiously. "I will pay you double, treble, what he has agreed to."

"You could give me some retaining fee, so I am at liberty to decline the case."

Loriania took out her pocket-book.

"I will give you your retaining fee now," she said. "You would serve the one who can pay the best, would you not?"

"Certainly. For that are we lawyers; and I wouldn't be human if I didn't."

"You know just where to find this boy?" continued Loriania.

"I do; he's in a very safe place. He'll stop there until I go for him."

"Where is that?"

"Blackwell's Island."

"Heavens! What is he doing there?" exclaimed Loriania, excitedly.

"He got into a difficulty with some young thieves, and was sent up, by some mistake, but I can fix that as soon as I see the judge that sentenced him. We'll have him off the Island in a jiffy."

"We must. He must not stay there a day, an hour, longer than is necessary. Here is money—I have been told it will do anything in New York."

"Pretty much; and I guess New York isn't an exception to other places. 'Filthy lucre' is the Archimedean lever that moves the world. It will move our bold Fergus off of Blackwell's Island at all events."

"To-day?"

"Hum! better say to-morrow. 'We work by wit and not by witchcraft, and wit depends on dilatory time.'"

"I will call again to-morrow."

"I shall be pleased to see you, madam."

"You will have the boy here?"

"I'll try my best."

"You will find me grateful."

"Don't mention it. I am proud to serve you. Hang it, madam, I may be a lawyer, but I've got a heart—I've got a heart!"

"I must confess you are a different kind of a man from what I expected to see, and you have cheered me beyond my hopes. Good-day, sir. Expect me to-morrow."

Pickles gallantly opened the door for Loriania to pass out. Then he closed it after her, and took up the bank-bill she had left upon the table.

"Let me see what my retaining 'es is," he said, pleasantly. "Great Janus! Five hundred dollars!—a five-hundred-dollar bill! Phew! This is going to be a better case than I expected!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 309.)

Centennial Stories.

"SUPPER FOR TEN."

A STORY OF THE REVOLUTION.

BY T. C. HARRAUGH.

THE result of the sanguinary engagement at Waxhaw Creek on the 29th day of May, 1780, placed a large tract of beautiful country at the mercy of Tarleton and his troopers. They overran the districts watered by the Wateree and Catawba, committing, in the name of their imbecile king, atrocities which at this late day fire the patriot blood. They treated the patriots as criminals, and hunted them from their homes to the swamps and canebrakes which were scoured by bloodhounds and Tories who knew their secret retreats. The loyal women of South Carolina were subjected to the grossest indignities by the British troops, and more than one family were roused from their slumbers by the crackling of the flames that surrounded their homes.

Such atrocities made more stubborn the nature of the patriots. They sent new recruits to Marion, Buford and Sumpter, and the haughty Tarleton soon discovered that his torches had envenomed him with perils of which he had not dreamed. Waxhaw Creek had strengthened his world renowned legion. Encouraged by the victory, hundreds of Tories flocked to his standard, and were commissioned in the work of devastation. They drew their sabers with a thrill of devilish triumph, for they hated their patriot neighbors, and had longed for the hour when they could dye their blades in true blood in the name of the British king!

The cool shades of evening were gathering around a rather pretentious plantation home when ten men, accompanied by several negroes, drew rein before the long flower-bordered veranda. The white men wore the British uniform, though some did not look like soldiers.

"Hallo!" shouted the leader of the band. "Hallo! my rebel friends. Here are guests you were not looking for. Come out and welcome us, or, by the flag of St. George!"

"Some one's coming!" said a second trooper, as the opening of the door made the leader pause abruptly.

Then a silence fell around the band as a tall woman, about five and forty years of age, stepped to the edge of the veranda and scrutinized her visitors. She did not tremble when she saw sabers at their sides and pistols in their belts; on the contrary, her dark eyes flashed with defiance, and her hands closed indignantly.

"To whom am I indebted for this visit?" she asked, fixing her eyes upon the man whose voice had commanded her from the house.

"To Major Duval of the King's army, and nine of his brother officers," answered the officer, lifting his hat with a mock gallantry that made his companions smile.

"Madam Courtney, we have heard of your excellent suppers, and have ridden twelve miles to enjoy one of them. Therefore, we trust you will receive your friends with your proverbial hospitality and order supper for ten."

"Gentlemen, your unexpected visit finds me unprepared," Mrs. Courtney answered. "If you had but informed me of your coming—"

"So that you could have communicated with your husband and son who are hidden in some swamp hereabouts!" said the officer.

"No, Madam Courtney, we do not post the enemy concerning our movements, and must excuse us for not sending a sable Mercury in advance. But let me bring this talk to an end. We are as hungry as the devil, and trust you will at once prepare supper for ten."

"Certainly," answered the patriot lady. "Please to dismount, gentlemen, and make yourselves at home on my premises."

She turned away as the troopers began to dismount, and re-entered the house.

"Who are they, mother?" asked her daughter, whom she encountered in the hall.

"A squad of Tarleton's troopers who want to eat us out of victuals," answered Mrs. Courtney with flashing eyes. "Bertha, now is the hour for us to do something for the Carolinas. Those marauders want supper, and we must load the table with the best we have—the wines in the cellar, the new honey in the pantry. We must well prepare the last feast they shall enjoy for a long time!"

"What do you mean, mother?" asked Bertha, Courtney with wonderment depicted in her deep blue eyes.

"I mean that Colonel Courtney must fall upon them while they tarry here. They are the king's men, Bertha; the very men who murdered our friends at Waxhaw Creek, and if they could catch the colonel and John to-night, they would return our hospitality by hanging them before the house."

Bertha's face grew pale.

"The murderers?" she exclaimed. "How many men are with father now?"

"Six! You know where he is."

"Yes, and I will summon him here!" replied Bertha. "Do you keep the troopers here with wine and song until you hear the signal of our arrival, a shot without the house. It is almost dark, but I can find the swamp, and Jupe will carry me through all dangers."

"God speed you, girl!" cried Mrs. Courtney. "I will keep them here!"

Bertha Courtney hastened to her brother's room and donned a suit of his clothes; in which she glided from the house to the stables, quite a little distance away. It was the work of but a few minutes to caparison a lithe limbed chestnut horse, and while the soldiers were enjoying themselves on the veranda, the patriot girl was galloping over a lonely road, dimly seen in the light of the stars.

Mrs. Courtney having set Dianah and her sable assistants to work on the repast demanded at her hands, rejoined the troopers on the porch.

"Madam Courtney," exclaimed Major Duval when he caught sight of her. "I have been telling my comrades about your daughter—Bertha, I believe you call her. I have declared that she is the prettiest girl in the Wateree valley, and I want to substantiate my declaration. Will you not inform her of our arrival?"

It was well, perhaps, that the troopers did not see the momentary pallor that rested on

the patriot madam's cheek. It was, indeed, but momentary, for her reply, which quickly followed the question, told that she was herself again.

"I regret that my daughter is not at home," she said. "Were she here she should treat you to a song, for she sings well."

"A song is what we want!" cried one of the burliest troopers in the party. "I know your daughter is a singer, and I have heard that her mother is one of the tuneful birds of the Wateree. Come, madam, give us a song while your slaves are getting us our supper."

"I fear you will not appreciate the few songs I chance to know," the loyal woman said with a flush.

"Which is a high compliment to our appreciation!" said the trooper, who seemed to harbor ill will against the house. "Sing us something, if it be but an infernal rebel song."

"Yes, give us a genuine rebel song to the tune of Waxhaw Creek!" cried half a dozen voices.

"Would not the tune of Saratoga please your royal ears better?" asked the patriot woman with a flush of resentment. "The tune our cannon sung at Saratoga cost your king a handsome army."

"No more of this!" cried the trooper who had broached the subject of song. "Mrs. Courtney, we did not come here to listen to your taunts; we have ordered supper for ten, and your rebel tongue may get you into trouble. So, give us the song without further ado, or by King George's crown! I'll leave a torch under your couch when we ride away to-night."

Mrs. Courtney's eyes flashed at the slightly intoxicated speaker whom she recognized as one of her husband's personal foes, and opened the door that led into the parlor.

"I sing at the instrument," she said. "The gentlemen will please step in."

The troopers rose and passed into the spacious room which the servants had lighted, and seated themselves in the luxurious chairs.

"No treachery, mind you!" whispered the trooper as he passed Mrs. Courtney at the threshold. "At the first sign of treason we'll transform the feast into a confagration."

He was answered with a look, and the next moment the patriot mother was seated at the harpsichord, (first form of piano).

For a minute she swept the shining keys as if undecided what to play. Then her voice broke forth in the soul-stirring notes of a patriot song current in those days throughout the South. At the first words the troopers exchanged derisive glances, and more than one shook their clenched hands at the singer, who did not see their gestures.

Without a word the enraged auditors listened till the last note died away, with indescribable melody when their leader, Major Duval, spoke. His face was red with anger.

"Madam Courtney, you sing well," he said, "but that song is fit only to be sung in the infernal regions. May I inquire concerning its author—who we would hang on capture?"

Mrs. Courtney rose and confronted the mad-dened band.

"That song, sir, was composed by my daughter Bertha!" she said, with a pride that brought a glow to her temples.

"The devil!" cried Major Duval, springing to his feet. "And pray, where did she compose it?"

"At this instrument."

The brief silence that followed was broken by the execrations which the troopers heaped upon the golden head of Bertha Courtney.

"The harpsichord has been disgraced!" suddenly said Major Duval, and his sword leaped from its scabbard as he crossed the room.

"No more rebel tunes shall be wrung from this instrument!" he said, pausing before the piano, and the next instant he struck the keys three sharp blows which broke them, and rendered tuneless the costly instrument.

Mrs. Courtney beheld the destruction and spake but one word when her calm eyes met the major's flashing ones.

"Coward!"

"But a soldier of King George!" was his reply. "Our duty is to suppress treason, and that accused harpsichord has helped to fill the South with the very essence of it. I never suspected that your daughter composed that rebellious lyric, and it may be well with her that she is not here to-night."

"Were she here not a British hand should touch her!" cried Mrs. Courtney, indignantly.

"Who would defend the little rebel?" demanded the major.

"Her mother!" was the reply, and a moment later the patriot woman continued, with a smile, "But I do not desire a quarrel with my guests. These are war times, and our opinions have made us enemies. In my house I would have no quarrels, and gentlemen, I beg of you to put all animosity aside while you discuss the repast which Susan's bell informs me is now ready."

The minutes wore away and the feast was drawing to a close without the expected signal. The seals of the wine bottles were broken, and toasts to England and King George were drunk amid much excitement. The British troopers grew hilarious, and Mrs. Courtney feared that she would lose the signal amid the confusion.

"This time we were moving!" suddenly cried Major Duval, who had just consulted his handsome watch. "We will ride back to Tarleton and tell him how well we have feasted on a foeman's viands."

He was looking at the loyal woman as he spoke the last sentence,

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To Commence Next Week!

THE MASKED MINER; OR, The Iron-Merchant's Daughter. A TALE OF PITTSBURG.

BY DR. WM. MASON TURNER,
AUTHOR OF "THE COLLEGE RIVALS," "THE COLLEGE RIVALS," ETC.

Who was he—the splendid young man who descended daily in the dark shaft, to delve all day in the caves of the earth?

Who was he, the rough, hardy old headman, who loving his young companion with a deep and tender affection, stood by him, like a strong rock, when the storm came?

Who was he, who, bounding the steps of the young miner, drew him under the ban of God and Man, and wrought human hearts into misery's abode?

Who was she, the rare, radiant and beautiful woman, herself the victim of circumstances strange and affecting, who floats through the story like embodied dream? Read this

INTENSELY-ABSORBING NARRATIVE, which is both a love romance and a tragedy—a tale of honest poverty and purse-proud affluence where noblest and the basest passions are arrayed in fierce contention and struggle to the end, in which the author's dramatic style adds greatly to the vivid impression of the startling story. It is, probably, Dr. Turner's finest production, and will now be read with great delight.

Sunshine Papers.

His After-Dinner Remarks.

"This is a truly extraordinary age," he said, severely, after the dinner had been removed, arising and seating himself in front of the register.

"Of course it is," agreed she, sweetly. She meant to ask him for money to buy a new French pompadour wash to turn, the next day. He lighted a cigar, put his feet on the marble mantel, tilted back his chair to a most alarming angle, fixed his eyes on the ceiling, and continued his remarks:

"A most extraordinary age; not a doubt of it! An age of push and rush, and gush, steam, electricity, and gas, and plenty of the latter. An age of political, financial and social humbuggery, crusades, revivals, and reforms. An age of individual selfishness, public corruption, and gigantic swindles, of exalted theories, enlightened minds, and universal morality. An age in which the greatest marvel of all is how the senior part of it survives the ceaseless shocks of new inventions and new ideas, and how the junior part survives such illiberal and monotonous times!"

"Oh! darling," she commenced, soothingly, with her head on one side, surveying the effect of the new fringe she was sewing on her cuirass basque, as he stopped, to take a pull at his cigar; but he proceeded, with asperity.

"Yet, we do move, with slow strides, toward a higher civilization; and among zealous reformers, and even among some deep thinkers there is no inconsiderable number who assert that that civilization must be gained by enlargement of woman's sphere, the higher education of woman, and a national recognition of woman's rights!"

"And, pet, do you not believe—"

"To the higher education of woman, madam," he continued, scathingly, "I say amen! Let them be educated away up, as high as their intellects can climb learning's ladder. Goodness knows, it will not hurt many of them to get a sensible idea in their heads, even if it is not an original one; at present there are few enough, of any kind, stowed under most face frizzes, coronal braids, crown puffs, side curls and rear plaits!"

"Now, Charlie!" she pouted, reproachfully. He only knocked the ashes off his cigar, and went on, spitefully.

"But as for the enlargement of woman's sphere—Heaven help the men when woman dabbles in more occupations than she does at present, or claims more rights than under the existing state of society! Why, already man is her servant, her slave, her fool!" he exclaimed, with the greatest acrimony.

She remembered that when she insisted he should take her old, ripped-up, Dolly Varden silk down to the dyer's that morning, he grumbled that men were women's slaves, and he wished she would not forever be sending bundles by him. But, what was the use of having a husband who went down town every morning, if he couldn't do one's errands that lay in his way? And, really, what he was saying was too rank heresy for a member of the "Benighted and Oppressed Females' Enlightenment Society" to listen to quietly; so she interrupted acidly.

"Then, pray, why does not some one advance an unanswerable reason why woman should be debarr'd from practicing such professions as the enlargement of her sphere will throw freely open to her? Why does not some one drag to the light of day and reason an incontrovertible proof of woman's inability to exercise those prerogatives that she claims as her 'rights' in common with man? Is it not because a woman can fill any sphere—equally well with man? Is it not because she is really man's equal in mental ability, intellectual culture, and executive power?"

"No!" he thundered. "There is an unanswerable reason why woman's sphere should not be enlarged; an incontrovertible proof that she is not qualified to exercise the prerog-

atives she claims equally with man! Why, if she were admitted to our official positions, sat on our judiciary benches, and occupied our secretarieships, we'd be a ruined nation in a month. She would rob the treasury to pay for red-tape; and the way she'd use it! Every official document would be wound with it by the yards, and then it would not be safe. The pages would slip and slide, and everything would get out of kilter, generally, and private instructions to the Kaiser's chamberlains would find their way to the court of England, while Kaiser William would be surprised with our plans for conquering Germany; and the devil would be to pay everywhere!"

"Why, Charles Augustus! You're swearing! And do you mean to say a woman couldn't handle red-tape and government documents as well as a man?"

"Yes, I do mean to say it; for I never saw a woman who had any idea of the proper use of string and paper! With all the talk about her executive power, intellectual culture, and mental ability, I have yet to see the woman with enough of one, or all three, to tie a bundle scientifically! She will pin one corner, twist this, fold that, and wind enough small cord around the whole rough package to keep a grocery store supplied for a month; and then expect a man to carry the demoralized looking affair for her. First, the string slips off here; then there; then this corner comes undone, and then that; the contents slide out of one side and fall out of the other; and eventually the whole thing collapses and the articles are scattered to the four parts of the earth!"

A horrible suspicion has been growing in her mind. She puts down the cuirass basque, and falters:

"Charlie, my silk went all right!"

"Your silk, madam, went all over Broadway, where I crossed opposite John, and will never be seen more. The incontrovertible proof I—well, there, you need not cry about it. You might better thank your stars it was not you that made such a show of yourself, with the knife-plaiting, and ruffles, and bias bands, dropping all around in the mud! and finally the whole thing spilling under the horses' hoofs. I should not be at all surprised to see myself photographed in the *Graphic* to-morrow, and then will it not make a nice mess?"

"But it was to make over for my spring suit because you said times were so hard I couldn't have a new one," she sobbed.

"Well, for heaven's sake, stop crying. And if you'll make me a solemn promise never to try to make me carry another bundle that you have tied, and never to quote any more of your 'Benighted and Oppressed Females' Enlightenment Society's' bosh around me until you can do up any bundle better than any man you know, I'll buy you a new silk to-morrow."

Of course she promised. And there was peace between them.

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

MIDNIGHT VIGILS.

WHEN sleep forsakes you at night and you find that you cannot work the sleeping dog, even though you have counted five hundred backward and forward, and have tossed about on the pillows like a ship in a sea of restlessness, do you ever rise from your bed, take a seat at the window and give yourself up to thought?

You think it is so hard to be deprived of a few hours' sleep, and you are inclined to think that no lot in life could be harder than you are then enduring. Your eyes wander to that light in the upper chamber of the opposite house and you then know there is a harder lot than yours, you know that, for more than a week, the persons in that room have had neither rest nor sleep. The one being racked with pain that seems as if naught but death could soothe—the other, a true and tender-hearted wife, watches by her husband's side night and day, and well and faithfully does she keep her vigil. The eyelids may feel heavy but they never close for long; the hours may seem long and tedious but they will seem longer still when life has departed from the one whom she watches. When you think of this, does your sleepless night seem as hard to bear?

Over there, in the next street, among the low tenements, are other sleepless souls, working far into the night and not ceasing until the morning light shall illumine the heavens. It is a struggle in the dark that is going on there, for the little candle gives but feeble light. It is a struggle with poverty, and one could scarcely have a worse antagonist. Those eyes would indeed close, and the weary brain would go wandering into dreamland where cares would be forgotten, weariness unknown and work an unremembered thing, if they could do so; but every moment passed in sleep is so much money out of their income—the income of these midnight toilers. It is not one night a week that they must keep from slumbering, it is several nights, while we, inconsistent and peevish beings, complain if we lose but a few hours' rest and never think of those to whom day and night are almost the same.

At the corner of the street is a sad sight. A young man, well dressed, in an imberbed condition, is leaning against a lamp-post, gesticulating to an imaginary audience. It might strike you as being a comic scene, but I can not discover the humorous side to it. I seem to know there is some mother wearily waiting, watching and praying for that son's return, for, though lost to himself and of no benefit to the world in his present condition, he is dear to her. Poor mother! her watching will be in vain, for this night, for the sturdy watchman has taken him in charge and will give him lodgings for the night. There will be another burden for that mother to bear when her vigil is over, for she will learn where her son was taken to. There are many mothers over this land who have these same kind of thorns in their crowns to wear, and when I have a sleepless night, I think of them, and I thank Heaven that my wakefulness is not from such a cause as theirs.

The very night that we sit at our window may be the last one on earth of the condemned murderer. Can there be rest or sleep for him on this night? Do you suppose life ever seemed so dear to him? He has taken away life and he knows that his life must be taken from him to pay the penalty. While we are waiting and wishing for the dawn of day to come, and thinking the hours so long, this condemned man wishes the dawn would never come, and he thinks that moments never went so swiftly before. The morrow that is to bring rest to him will carry despair to him, for it will take him nearer to eternity. Who would want to pass such a night of torture and suffering as does the murderer on his last one on earth?

Still the lights burn in chambers, parlors and cellars. The student is at his books endeavoring to solve knotty problems that are to be a benefit to the world, and the thought

of that makes his headache less severe—his brain less weary. The actor is conning over the new character he is to assume, for his ambition to be perfect in all he undertakes spurs him on and he is willing to lose rest and sleep so he may ascend to the topmost round of the ladder and be an honor to his profession.

So, you perceive, we are not the only ones who are sleepless—that toll, cares and sorrows keep others awake. When we think over these things, and call to mind how much worse off other persons are than we, perhaps our sleepless night has been a benefit to us, after all.

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

New Dollar Store.

I HAVE just opened a new Dollar Store in this city, which will be conducted on purely humane principles, and if any article which you purchase is not worth one dollar it won't be the fault of the article.

Each article is warranted to be just what it is, and that is more than they generally do elsewhere.

The poor man's dollar is just as good at this store as the rich man's, and in many cases will buy just as much.

I have been appointed agent to redeem all the greenbacks in circulation preparatory to the establishment of a coin currency, giving in exchange such articles as you will find in the subjoined list.

All the money in the country is wanted, for it must be taken up.

All articles are marked one dollar, and we will not take anything more if we break by it.

List to this list:

One gross of groceries.

One dozen silver-plated forks of the road, with ivory handles.

One box of floor-line Indian-rubber hose.

One broken set of plates.

One elegant set of porcelain Civil Service.

One highly chased gold ring.

One highly chased Whisky Ring.

One elegant patent-leather boot which a fellow got in a trade.

One ten-keyed cellar-door, six octave.

One photograph album, which will contain fifty pictures, a bushel of coal, or ice enough to last a week.

One looking-glass at which you will never growl. When you look in it, you will find yourself just as you think you are; the pimples all gone, the moles removed, the freckles played out, the wrinkles smoothed out, and your nose turned down. Your enemy looking in at it will see himself in all his hideousness.

This mirror fills up a gap which has long existed in domestic want—columns.

One brush; this answers well for a hair-brush, a tooth-brush, a whitewash-brush, or a fly-brush—being a heap of a brush, it is also a regular brush-hoop.

One splendid worsted shawl, which has gone through the mill and could not be any more worsted.

One violin, commonly written vial-in from the fact that it pours forth music as if from vials. It will give out the sweetest tunes if you will only put it on a wood-buck and play on it with a saw. It is young yet, but in a few years it will be a bass viol if you only give it a chance.

One very highly colored spoon-holder, just imported from Africa; answers to the name of Sambo.

One basket of eggs, nearly good.

One dollar-bill, do do

One very fine-tooth comb, with teeth inserted on gold plate, and warranted not to ache so the dentist will have to pull them out.

This comb is warranted to retain every tooth in its head for a century.

One cast-iron anchor-chief.

One dozen assorted button-holes.

One coat of tar and feathers.

One paper of assorted rolling-pins.

One fine parlor set.

One set for cotillion.

One alarm-clock, warranted to go off and alarm sleep callers out of the house.

One compass securely boxed.

One do, that cannot be boxed even for shipment.

This not only points to the four cardinal points, but points to the cardinal virtues, points the way you ought to go, and points out any man you want in a crowd. It will also tell you the time of day if you ask in a polite way. It is provided with punctuation points and points of law. You can take the nearest and use it for a tobacco-box.

One pocket dictionary containing all the words in the English language. There you can have them! Put them together right and you will have the finest poem in the world, or the finest prose article. In applying epithets in a private quarrel you can sling the whole dictionary at his head, and say "there's what you are!"

One scholarship in the commercial college.

One scholarship in the Reform Farm.

One ticket to the Opera House.

One do, to the Poor House.

One elegantly carved turkey (wood).

One razor warranted to stay dull so you won't cut yourself.

One ticket good for one trip on the steamboat.

One ticket good for one trip on the grass.

One letter of recommendation as to character.

One marriage-license, good until used.

One dozen bars of soap.

One sand-bar.

One wooden lamp; this will burn without oil—if you put it in the stove.

One fine silk parasol, warranted to be large enough at least to throw a shadow over one eye at a time. It will keep off the smiles of the sun, but attract the smiles of some old gentleman's son. One of the most fashionably convenient things to carry, for you will hardly know you have it.

One pair of musically-stringed shoes—warranted to play any tune—the most perfect of stringed instruments.

One lot of last year's almanacs.

One lot in Squankum, immediate occupation not necessary.

One lot in cemetery, must be immediately occupied.

One divorce, warranted to fit—providing you have "fit."

One chance in Louisville lottery.

One chance for your life.

Ten pounds of sugar.

Ten pounds of fist.

One fore-quarter of beef.

One four-quarter of dollar.

We will give you credit for not asking credit.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

A BLONDE girl, deserted by her lover, silently pines away and dies, but a brunette lives on to make it a furnace upon earth for the man who deceives her.

Topics of the Time.

—Let every man do his duty, this Centennial spring, beginning by clearing up all such rubbish about his yard as old barrels, tin cans, broken bottles, hoopskirts, superannuated bustles, dead limbs, and caved-in barrels.

—Appropos of recent developments at Washington, a friend revives the remark of George III. when exposure after exposure was being made of corruption in the Commons and Lords: "I never see a peer approach me without thinking of locking up my spoons." And George, half-insane as he was, was not too suspicious in this. The long wars of Great Britain had, as all wars do, brought to the surface every species of rascality until the very ministers in his cabinet were suspected and tainted. In George IV's reign such dirty scamps as Fox and Sheridan were the chief advisers of the throne, and a state of society thus extended that the English nation would very much like to forget. Our own so-called "demoralization" is a mere speck on the body-politic; England, in George III. and IV's reign, was a leprosy.

—A grocer in the town of Santa Clara, Cal., has adopted an original method of business. Each side of the store is fitted up for business on its own account. In the general arrangement each side is a duplicate of the other, the difference being that one side is cash and the other credit. When a customer comes in, the first question asked is, "Do you wish to buy for cash or on account?" If it is a cash customer the goods and prices on the cash side are shown, but if it is one who wants credit, he is shown the other side, and made to realize the value of ready money—an idea worthy of imitation. The credit system is the poor man's evil and the rich man's snare.

—There is said to be a determination on the part of the Commission to close the Exhibition on the Sabbath. The question arises which Sabbath it will be. Many of the nations of the earth will be represented there, and if the Commission endeavor to please them all in this Sabbath matter, there will be no necessity of opening the show at all. For the Greeks they will close it on Monday; for the Persians on Tuesday; for the Assyrians on Wednesday; for the Egyptians on Thursday; for the Turks and all Mohammedan nations on Friday; for Jews and Seventh Day Baptists on Saturday; and for all Christians they will close on Sunday. The fact that each party has equally good grounds for its Sabbath only goes to prove the folly of any one man, or set of men, or sect, arrogating the right of exclusive jurisdiction in religious matters. It will end, we suppose, in our own Sabbath being adopted, because it is our recognized national "day of rest."

—A police-officer relates the following as his experience: Whenever an officer hears a woman on the street creating a disturbance, and in a drunken condition, he knows at once that she has been drinking whisky. A drunken woman who has nothing to say has been drinking ale or beer. If she has imbibed too freely of sour wine and eaten too much sweet cake she will be sick—very sick. If she is sparkling and not vicious—Mr. and Mrs. B. but would rather sing and be merry than tear the hair out of the head of that other girl, why, she has taken too much sherry and egg; and if she commences to cry while under the influence, it may be safely inferred that she has been taking too much of a throat bath of brandy and water. From the palace to the hotel, and from the luxurious bed chamber to the hard bottom of the street gutter, women are to be found under the influence of drugs or rum every day in a large city. It is only the more unfortunate, or those who are on the lowest rounds of humanity's ladder, that ever come to the public notice, or that are ever brought before a tribunal of justice.

—And, children, we have this to say to you: the very next time your mother predicts that "you will not have a tooth in your head" from eating so much candy, reply pleasantly, but firmly, that Henry, Duke of Beaufort, for forty years a toothless man, was extremely fond of sugar and died at the age of eighty with a full set of perfect teeth in his head. If this is not enough, crush your parent completely by remarking, candidly, that every schoolboy knows that Cleland, in his "Institutes of Health," mentions a man who was so extremely fond of sugar and addicted to its use, and who reached the ripe age of one hundred years, having good teeth until he was four-score, and then actually cut a new set. If your father comes to your mother's relief, assure him that teeth have been soaked in sugar for a whole year without any perceptible effect, and that the best authorities now say that sugar is good for the children. As a rule, we don't believe in the youngsters rebelling against their elders, but in this case all we can say is—if you have a "sweet tooth" cultivate it!

—The British Medical Journal calls attention to those nicely-calculated muscular effects which in billiards the player is to place his ball effect in the desired position. A skillful player is enabled to accomplish this sometimes a dozen times hand-running and then falls. The *a priori* view is that the difficulty lies in getting the ball, by slight muscular action, into the proper place, but the real difficulty is to keep it up. It is not the muscles of the arms that fall or tire; it is rather the muscular adjustment which becomes exhausted. A series of very fine physical and mental adjustments are necessary, and sooner or later the eye tires, and failure is the consequence. It is quite probable that the brain centers in connection with the eyes, by which the exact calculation of how much muscular power is to be imparted, and how the muscles are to be co-ordinated, are chiefly affected in the exhaustion, but it may be that the muscular action of the eye itself is implicated. As a remedy, in order to restore the necessary adjustment of muscular power, it might be well to look away from a billiard-table between the strokes so as to relieve, in a manner, the mental and physical strain.

—Much damage has been caused in Germany and Hungary by the recent overflowing of the rivers. The provinces of Saxony and Silesia were threatened with special severity. The Elbe broke through dams and dykes near Magdeburg, Kalbe, and Wittenberg. The Vistula overflowed its banks near Pless in Silesia, and inundated the country for miles around. Great numbers of the inhabitants were compelled to seek safety in flight. Entire districts in Posen were flooded, and in the city of that name many persons were drowned. The Empress of Germany has visited Magdeburg since the floods to preside at a meeting of the Women's Relief Association, and the Diet will be asked to make an appropriation for the sufferers. In Hungary fifty-five villages near the border were on March 1 nineteen feet under water, and the new city of Pesth in ruins. The Emperor and Empress of Austria have sent 60,000 florins for the relief of the sufferers by the inundation.

—An English lady named Straton sends to the *London Times* an interesting account of her winter ascent of Mont Blanc. She left Chamouni on Jan. 28, with two guides and two porters, and arrived safely at the Grand Mulets. Owing to an accident the two porters, who had remained at the Grand Mulets till Jan. 31, when, with the guides and the uninjured porter, she started at 3:40 A. M. They arrived at the Grand Plateau at half-past seven. The weather was clear and calm, the thermometer three degrees below zero. On arriving at the Rochers Fondroyes the north wind met them, and when they got on the top of the first Bosse du Dromedaire two of the lady's fingers were frosted, and a delay of three-quarters of an hour to rub them became necessary. The summit of Mont Blanc was reached at 3 P. M., when the thermometer showed ten degrees below zero. The view, although the same lady had made the ascent three times in the summer, is described as magnificent beyond all anticipation, and much more perfect than in summertime. The Grand Mulets were reached on the return at 7:30 that evening, and Chamouni on the following day, where the party was received with enthusiasm.

Readers and Contributors.

To CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for each return.—No correspondence if any nature is permissible in a package marked as "book MSS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as "copy," third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note and paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, leaving off each page as it is written, and carefully giving in the full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. are able to us are well worthy of us.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases. Correspondents will find replies to queries in the paper lasting three weeks after reception of the inquiry. The reply sooner is temptingly able.

Accepted: "Tested;" "To a Malcontent;" "A Kiss in the Dark;" "All in a Snow-storm;" "What the End Was;" "The Reign of the Siren;" "Heat;" "The Last of the Swallow;" "Chestnut;" "Van Dyck's Ward;" "Salford's Prisoner;" "A Woman's Cross and Crown;" "A Girl's Faith;" "Heart Bowed Down."

Declined: "Great Expectations, etc.;" "Aunt Harriet's Stratagem;" "Two Hats and One Tale;" "Maude Lindley's Last Season;" "A Bouquet of Thorns;" "Was He a Gentleman?" "The Minister's Test;" "Mixed Drinks;" "Dandy Charlie;" "Old Scots;" "The Broken Bridge;" "A How in the Castle."

SPECIAL NOTE TO AUTHORS. All manuscripts sent through the mails to Beadle and Adams for use in any of their publications will and are payable in full letter rates. MSS. coming to us underpaid in postage we must refuse to receive. Several apparently desirable MSS. have this week been thus refused, and have therefore gone to the Dead Letter Office.

S. R. F. Have written as you requested. Your MS. went to Dead Letter Office.

N. H. A. Can supply a complete set of the "Flying Yankee"—price fifty-four cents.

J. D. and TWENTY OTHERS, Pittsburg. We hold the request under consideration. Others have made the same request.

E. P. M. Mardi Gras—Tuesday—is the day before Lent. See last issue: "Sunshine Paper." It is the closing day of the carnival season.

J. S. M. We know of no live gorilla ever having been brought to this country. Several pro-fessed gorillas have been exhibited, but they were apes—not gorillas.

W. F. W. There are so many books of recipes that, unless those you name are really very valuable and unobtainable in the books, it will not be easy to find a publisher.

No NAME, Russellville, Ill. We cannot reprint matter from other papers.—The author named is now writing for this paper.

A. M. K. We can supply a few of the portraits of Buffalo Bill, printed on plate paper, at ten cents each. We have published no portrait of the other author named. Oil paintings are also for sale.

THREE-BALL BILLIARDS. Beadle's Dime "Lover's Casket" gives the information you wish. Any newsdealer has it.—Your query on billiards any expert or amateur will answer. Special rules are sometimes adopted for special games.

ALFRED D. You must not imagine that matrimony is a path all roses. It is not wise for any young man to marry until he is in a position where he is quite able to support a family. He must certainly recommend you to go to housekeeping. It is better for young people to commence housekeeping in ever so humble a manner than to "board." The great fault of many young men and women of this day is their desire to commence life in the same circumstances which perhaps their parents have spent years of their lives in attaining.

XXX. You'll have to ask of the Land Office, at Washington, if you can enter land for another party.—The cheapest route to Galveston, Texas, is by steamer from New York—fare about \$55.

PARSONS FRANKLIN. Ninety miles from New York to Philadelphia: fare \$3.25 at present. Soon will be cheaper.—Can't say what will stop the hair from growing down on the forehead.—Bennett's Herold train makes about forty-five miles per hour.

M. W. N. Don't now remember enough about the MS. to give the opinion required. Passing upon so many MSS. it is impossible to recall the details of contributions.—Badger commences his career when very young, as he now is only about twenty-five.

A BURIED LOVE.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

Sweet were the memories of springtime
When we felt the sun's warm glow;
When of flowers we made a garland,
The earliest ones that grow.
When side by side we were straying
Through the meadows and the grove,
While the soft breezes were whispering
We too then whispered of love.

In the sunny days of summer
We wandered happler still,
And lingered beside the blossoms
Whose perfume the air did fill.
We lingered beside the brooklet
Which through the meadow did flow,
Yes, singing the old, old story
Of lovers there long ago.

But in the sad autumn weather,
Ah, lovers we were no more;
Our sighs were sad as the breeze,
Our hearts were heavy and sore.
While the black winds around were chilling,
Our love still colder grew;
While rain in torrents was falling
We were weeping tears not few.

Fast came the showers in winter
Of the silent falling snow,
Burying the arched and flowers
So mournfully drooping low.
And our love then too was buried
Like all fading things of earth;
But not like the flowers of springtime
To receive another birth.

The Men of '76.

JOHN STARK.

The Wood-Ranger of the North.

BY DR. LOUIS LEGRAND.

"The cry of blood from the field of Lexington went through the land. None felt the appeal more than the old soldiers of the French war. It roused John Stark, of New Hampshire—a trapper and hunter in his youth, a veteran in Indian warfare, a campaigner under Abercrombie and Amherst, now the military oracle of a western neighborhood. Within ten minutes after receiving the alarm he was spurred toward the sea-coast, and on the way stirring up the volunteers of the Massachusetts border."

Thus the heroes of the Revolution answered the cry of outraged Liberty. Ten minutes sufficed to grasp the trusted rifle, to bid Molly Stark and the children good-by; that was all John Stark's preparation for the field. "Old Put" deserted the plow in the furrow, and sending his little son home with the oxen, was off for Lexington without even a good-by. How great is the debt we owe to such patriotism!

John Stark came of a stern Scotch stock, of the John Knox persuasion, who, for opinion's sake, made their homes in New Hampshire. There John was born, August 28th, 1728, at Londonderry, and there he grew to man's estate, along with three brothers. From boyhood the brothers were inured to the perils of the woods—developing in them all both a love for the hunt and a hardihood of courage which, in after years, rendered at least one of them a noted man.

These four brothers adventuring, in one of their expeditions into the wilds of Northern New Hampshire, were surprised by the St. Francis Indians. John and his brother Eastman were taken prisoners; Stinson and William being in a canoe, by John's earnest orders pushed off to escape, when the savages fired on them, mortally wounding Stinson. William escaped, but the two captives were borne to the Indian village, where they were made to run the gantlet. John's spirit and courage so pleased the savages that, after various trials of him, he was elected a chief of the tribe and remained in their village until ransomed by Massachusetts a year later (1753). The succeeding year, as agent of New Hampshire, he started on an exploring tour through what is now Vermont, and opened up that country to the knowledge of the authorities and colonization.

When the "old French War" broke out Stark entered the colonial service—taking a commission in Rogers' Rangers, which operated in Johnson's movement on Lake George. Baron Dieskau coming down from Montreal with a powerful force of French and Indians, was, after two successes, beaten at the bloody conflict of Fort Edward, near the lower end of Lake George, late in August, 1755. The baron was killed and his troops almost destroyed. In this hot work the Rangers bore a very distinguished part.

For two years thereafter the region of Lake Champlain was the scene of a severe general conflict. Both English and French were alert, and almost constant "brushes" were taking place between the scouts of the respective forces. Stark, in this service, soon became noted for his rare courage, skill and endurance. In January, 1757, occurred an event which proved all these qualities. The Rangers, led by Rogers, passed up from Johnson's post at the foot of Lake George, to reconnoiter the French positions at Crown Point and Ticonderoga, on Lake Champlain. The weather was intensely cold, and snow so deep that the Rangers were mounted on snow-shoes. Having captured part of a provision train passing between the two French posts, the Rangers were assailed by a strong force and had a most terrible fight, lasting from two P. M. until dark, when Stark led off the remnants of the Rangers, bearing along with him the wounded Rogers. Leaving the almost frozen men Stark started for relief, and by the evening of the next day had traveled forty miles on his snow-shoes, and returned the third day with the necessary means of bringing in the wounded. For this series of acts he was made a captain.

In the dreadfully disastrous events of 1757 the Rangers participated actively. Montcalm came down against the post at the foot of Lake George (Fort William Henry), and besieged the place with a force of about nine hundred French, Indians and Canadians. After a very brave resistance it capitulated, August 2d. The French commander was powerless to protect the garrison from the savages in his command, and an almost general massacre ensued of men, women and children. The Rangers were outside, and by their aid and safe conduct to Fort Edward, saved many of the fugitives.

This massacre, condemned by the civilized world, only proved that the savage instinct for blood was amenable to no authority. The chivalrous Montcalm, we are told, never ceased to regret the atrocious deed.

Stark, now captain of rangers, found service commensurate with his skill and daring in the ill-fated expedition of General Abercrombie, against Ticonderoga (July, 1758). The English were defeated; the brave and beloved young Lord Howe was killed and the disordered forces were pursued back to their forts on Lake George. Stark's rangers kept the savages employed, while the regulars retreated. The services indeed of Stark's, Rogers' and

Putnam's commands saved the whole army from destruction.

The campaign of the next season (1759), against the same fort, was successful, after a severe and sanguinary struggle—the rangers playing their usual role of scouts, spies, advance guard and sharpshooters.

The "Seven Years War" ended in 1760. The French were dispossessed of all their possessions in the Canadas and the territory of the North-west.

Twelve years of peace and again the tocsin sounded. It found John Stark ready for the call. He answered the cry from Lexington as stated in our opening paragraph; in ten minutes he was on his way thither, and reached the field at the head of 1200 men who had gathered at Medford, in answer to his call. They arrived in time to assist in the fortification and battle of Bunker (Breed's) Hill, and did terrible work with their trusty old rifles, for, like Stark, many of the men had been "trained to death-deeds" in the Seven Years War.

After this service the old Indian fighter was sent with Gates to the Northern posts, on his old stamping ground—watching the enemy from old Fort Ticonderoga which Ethan Allen had captured, a few months before.

In December, 1776, he reported at Washington's headquarters, to find all there in confusion—the army literally disintegrating by reason of the time of enlistment having expired. His own old brigade was "bound for home," but Stark "went into the recruiting business" and every one of the New Hampshire men re-enlisted for a six weeks term—during which time Washington had resolved upon the bold stroke of re-crossing the Delaware and assailing the enemy at Trenton. Coming late into the council of war held on the evening of December 24th, Stark was asked by the commander-in-chief his opinion of the best mode to pursue under the circumstances—not yet having been advised of the commander's purposes.

Stark answered: "Your men have long been accustomed to place dependence upon spades and pick-axes for safety; but if you ever mean to establish the independence of the United States you must teach them to rely upon their fire-arms."

To which the discerning Washington replied:

"That is what we have agreed upon. We are to march, to-morrow, upon Trenton. You are to command the right wing of the advanced guard and General Greene the left."

And the events of the next few weeks showed that Washington had chosen well, for Stark participated in the sudden activity which almost drove the enemy out of New Jersey.

The cry was for men to serve for the war. To expedite this desired enlistment, Stark returned to New Hampshire, where, chiefly through his own influence and exertions, a fine body of troops was secured and sent forward in detachments; but when he was ready to resume his command, to his amazement he found himself, by order of the war commission, out-ranked by his juniors, and, in disgust, he threw up his command.

Returning to his farm, he equipped his four sons to fight in the ranks, and having dispatched them, he took their place at the plow. Every friend protested against his retirement. The noble-hearted patriot, Philip Schuyler, begged him to remain, but the sturdy old soldier answered:

"An officer who cannot maintain his own rank, and assert his own rights, cannot be trusted to vindicate those of his country."

Sentiments worthy of a true soldier.

When Burgoyne came down from Canada, to join the forces of Clinton advancing up the Hudson, and thus to discover the field of war, Stark beheld the peril, even from afar; but when Burgoyne had retaken Ticonderoga, and from thence threatened to devastate Vermont (then known as the territory of the New Hampshire Grants), the State of New Hampshire called him to assume command of its little army raised for home defense. He answered willingly, and soon had a thousand men in the field at Bennington. There he received orders, from General Lincoln in person, to move his troops to the west banks of the Hudson, to join the army under Schuyler; but John Stark refused to obey any command save that of his own State; he was there to protect his own soil from invasion, and do that he would, "or Molly Stark would be a widow."

He soon had to prove the wisdom of his decision. Burgoyne sent a strong and well-appointed force to capture Bennington and its valuable stores, which he greatly needed. Stark with his new militia, even more alert, forward and confronted the enemy, who, entrenched and sent for reinforcements. Then the old ranger resolved to assault, and did so, August 16th—striking the enemy from their quarters at once, himself leading the front attack. Without bayonet, saber or artillery, to assail a well-entrenched fort, provided with artillery, was a vast exploit, but it had to be done; and so done was it that, after a terrible struggle of two hours the British were beaten and all their camp and train secured.

Just then the reinforcements dispatched by Burgoyne—a body of Germans (Hessians) one thousand strong—came upon the ground and the battle was renewed. Stark was like a raging lion. Not a militiaman flinched, and soon they were cheered by the arrival of a new regiment under Col. Hornor, who "went in" with such élan that the new British force was driven back in disorder and with heavy loss.

This splendid affair was Burgoyne's first check, and so inspired the patriot cause that the militia fairly flocked to Gates' army to crush the invader. Congress expressed its joy by a vote of thanks and a restoration of Stark to his old rank of brigadier. With his men he now joined the main army and was in at the final capture of the whole grand army and its splendid material.

Stark's succeeding service was one of constant trust. He was stationed on the Hudson at West Point and sat on the court-martial that tried Andre. He did much to keep up the quotas of the New England States. His stern patriotism was felt throughout the ranks, and next to his old comrade in arms, Putnam, he was the popular favorite. The surrender of Burgoyne left the Northern army but little else to do than to watch; hence no service offered which further tested the old ranger's fighting qualities, and when the end came he returned to his home, one of the best beloved and most honored men in New England.

Stark lived to the great age of ninety-four years—then being the last but one surviving general of the Revolution. His remains now rest beneath an obelisk of granite, on a commanding hill, on the banks of the beautiful Merrimack. The record simply reads:

MAJOR-GENERAL STARK.

Even when that granite obelisk is no more the memory of John Stark will be dear to the sons of the Granite State.

A True Knight:

OR,

TRUST HER NOT.

BY MARGARET LEICESTER.

CHAPTER IX.

A BRAVE HEART'S GOOD-BY.

A WEEK or two have passed. How stands the game now?

Mr. Wylie, an eminent New York caricaturist, bearing a letter of introduction to Barthold Verne from a well-known publisher of that city, is a daily visitor, not only of the author's, but of his lovely children Maiblume and Coila. He cheerfully "roughs it" in the village, sleeping in a whitewashed bedroom the size of a handbox, and smoking all night to keep the mosquitoes at bay; eats flapjacks and hominy with pious thanksgiving, and hob-nobs with brown-handed farmers between the turnip-rows—all for the felicity of dawdling some hours every day beside the ladies of the cottage.

Such an amusing man! He has been all over the world; gives such graphic descriptions of what he has seen; and his portfolio is crammed with burlesques of everything, from a German cathedral to a Brazilian worker in the diamond mines.

Coila thinks he is better than the Paris *circus*, and even Maiblume's sad face sometimes brightens before his spirit of mocking gaiety.

Mr. Verne is in great trouble meanwhile; his big, honest heart is torn between conflicting emotions; he is learning, for the first time, the bitter lessons of suspicion and distrust. He who judged all men by his own sterling self, is gradually finding out that some who seem fair without, have hearts as black as sin—and the hardly learned knowledge is crushing him, hour by hour.

Paul Stanley is his master here, and teaches him the hateful lesson with untiring assiduity.

George Laurie comes and goes, haggard, care-worn, and abstracted, yet obstinately silent about the meaning of the change in him. He sees the altered looks of his dear friend and master; he sees the blighting shadow upon Maiblume; he knows that his happiness and all his hopes for the future are being whispered away by one whose hatred is bitter as death, relentless as the grave—Paul Stanley, whom a word of his would make his friend.

That word he cannot, will not speak, even for the sweet sake of friendship and of love, for, true as steel, he will die rather than betray his trust.

At last comes a crisis. George, riding into the hamlet in his usual mad haste that he might not keep the author waiting a moment for him in the study, encountered Stanley's ironical stare as he drew himself from his panting horse at the village hostelry.

The peculiar malignity of that look struck like an ice-bolt to the youth's heart, and he pursued his way to the cottage even more dejectedly than usual, for grief and care sat heavily upon him, and dark forebodings beset him that he had not fathomed the depth of his misfortune yet.

"I am in chains," groaned George, as all his bright prospects seemed darkening before him. "Chained by her dead hand, and honor rivets my fetters. Oh, that I may not act a coward's part whatever befalls me!"

He hurried into Mr. Verne's presence, and was scarcely surprised when the author did not raise his pale and troubled face to greet him.

George sat down to his work, and oh! how heavily the moments dragged with that desponding figure opposite him, so different from that which usually marched up and down with gay and jaunty tread, declaiming brilliant society hits, and delicately-tender love-episodes.

The secretary's pen moved more and more slowly, while his eyes wandered more and more frequently toward the silent author.

At last he threw down the pen, buried his face in his hands, and gave himself up to a short but terrible mental struggle. When he looked up, his face seemed to shine with brave and patient resignation—that handsome, boyish face, which had made the sunshine of the author's study for many a happy day.

"Mr. Verne," said he, in his simple, direct way, "the state of things between us is getting to be about too much for you. I want to put an end to it to-day."

Verne looked at him, yearningly.

"Yes, George," said he, faintly.

"I see that you have lost all confidence in me," continued George, "and that you will never regain it until I explain everything that I have been keeping secret."

"That's it! That's it, boy!" said the author, his eyes glistening with hope and expectation. "Explain everything—make a clean breast of it—I will never judge you harshly."

For a moment or two they looked at each other with strange intensity. Oh, the fond longing which filled the author's heart to overflow! Oh, the luring temptation that struggled hard with principle in George's breast!

"Explain!" said he, in a low voice of pain. "God knows I would have done so long ago had it been any wrong-doing of mine. I have done nothing which you would not approve of, Mr. Verne. This secret is not mine, but another's, and I am bound in honor to keep it."

"Hush! Hush! You are odorous as a stone!" cried Mr. Verne, in sudden and fierce excitement. "Stanley must be right! He has told me all about your presumptuous interference between him and his wife; was there no wrong-doing in that? And now this mystery—this hiding of yourself every night—what explanation can be given but that some shameful secret connected with your past has started up at this *mal apropos* season when you were just about to win my heiress' hand—Oh, God! that such a face should hide a vice-blackened heart!"

"Stop!" cried George, springing to his feet as if touched with the red-hot fingers of Torquemada. "You try me too much; I can't bear this! My secret! My past! What have I to do with it? In God's name, send for Stanley and let me tell the truth—" He stopped; the wild flush faded from his cheek, the flashing fire dimming in his eye. "No!" said he, clenching his hands, "I will never save myself by such a poltroon's course!"

Verne, who stood with the bell-rope in his hand, beaming with exultation, dropped it with a cry of grief and anger piteous to hear. "No!" reiterated George, more calmly, while the same shining serenity overspread his care-worn face; "my dear mother used to say to me, 'Do right though the heavens should fall.' To keep silence on this subject is what I think right, and I shall do it, though all that makes a heaven to me on earth should fall in ruins round me. Let me say what I intended to say when I interrupted your reverie. Mr. Stanley thinks he has cause to hate me; he has told me all about your presumptuous interference between him and his wife; was there no wrong-doing in that? And now this mystery—this hiding of yourself every night—what explanation can be given but that some shameful secret connected with your past has started up at this *mal apropos* season when you were just about to win my heiress' hand—Oh, God! that such a face should hide a vice-blackened heart!"

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chapter. You and he are friends of many years' standing, and you have the highest respect for his opinions. You can't be comfortable as long as I am here, a daily subject of contention between you. I began by saying that I must put an end to that state of matters to-day; I can only do so by resigning my situation as your secretary."

His voice died away in husky murmurs, for dearly he loved the man who had ever been so truly kind to him, but his face still shone with that pure, proud strength.

Verne writhed in his chair, changed color, gnawed his lip, and finally two big tears rolled down his cheeks, and he looked up in the heroic face with harrowing entreaty.

"I am a fool, I dare say," said he, "but I can't believe you false, George—I can't believe you unworthy! If you go away, you'll break my heart—and Maiblume's, too—poor Maiblume!"

"Oh, have mercy!" gasped George, trembling. "You tempt me too much! It is cruel! I must go—I couldn't stay another hour here, or I should forget myself and prove indeed both false and unworthy."

Mr. Verne turned away abruptly, and, leaning his forehead against the window-pane, remained silent for a long time; but George could see by the movement of his shoulders that he was sobbing like a great boy.

By and by he turned round, his face suspiciously glistening; and said, with a forlorn attempt at frigid majesty:

"Yes, Mr. Laurie, I see it is best for us to part. Since you are quite willing to give us all up for the sake of some Quixotic scruple, it is evidently the best thing to do. You will find what is due of your salary in the drawer, there, and the girls are at hand, I dare say, if you wish to bid them good-by. You don't wish to? Oh, very well—perhaps it is better so! Good-by, then—and—God bless and keep you, boy, wherever you go!" He wrung George's hand convulsively, broke down, and hurried from the study.

George left the house a few minutes afterward, with a heart that was bursting with grief. In all his bright, short life nothing like this had ever befallen him; love, honor, respect, had ever been accorded him.

And now! Homeless, friendless, enveloped in a cloud of suspicion and distrust—oh, it was hard to bear!

In his distress he had hoped to slip away without the agony of encountering Maiblume, but this was not to be.

He came upon a very sylvan group beneath a wide spreading cedar in the grassy lane which led to the hamlet; Maiblume, Coila, Mr. Paul Stanley and Mr. Nowell Wylie, all reclining in languid attitudes on the flower-gemmed grass.

Stanley's richly curled head lay upon the gauzy hem of Maiblume's draperies, and his full eyes, passion-fired, rested upon her pallid, half-averted face.

Mr. Wylie, his back propped up against the trunk of the tree and his sketch-book on his knees, made shift to pass the time agreeably by handing cartoons by the gross to the chattering Coila; who, in a diaphanous cloud of rose-tinted frippery, reposed by Stanley's side at Maiblume's feet; and with innocent wile sought to lure that gentleman from his unwelcome worship at her grieving Maiblume's shrine; and this in spite of the shrinking timidity with which she had never ceased to regard the gifted bard. Devoted Coila! No wonder if Maiblume's cold, trembling hand often stole with grateful pressure into hers; no wonder if the admiring Wylie turned his great globular eyes upward as if appealing to the heavens to behold and reward such beautiful self-sacrifice; no wonder if even the infatuated poet himself sometimes glanced her way with lazy interest in his beauty-loving eye!

Upon this pastoral idyl came George Laurie, haggard, broken-hearted, with despair in his hurried gait.

"Oh! George!" gasped Maiblume, hearing and seeing him first as only Love can hear and see; and she rose with her dear hands outstretched as if to grasp and comfort him, while all the dainty color forsook her quivering lips, and the big tears brimmed in her exquisite eyes.

Coila, too, uttered a tiny scream of sore dismay, and ran out to him and stopped him. He saw he was in for it, and like a brave man he gulped down his heart for that time and met it right gallantly.

He took Coila's clinging hand and walking with her into their midst said with a smile:

"I thought I was not to see you again, ladies, but Fate is kinder to me than I deserve. Circumstances have arisen which make it necessary for me to leave Stormcliff, and your father's service, Miss Verne, without delay. In fact I have bade him good-by and am going now."

Paler and paler waxed the stately Maiblume till no lily-of-the-valle could outlive her in bloodless purity; and a woeful shadow crept into her dilating eyes.

"You leave us now—forever!" faltered she, unconsciously wringing her slight hands.

"Now, and forever!" answered George, low-voiced, while all the heroism in his heart trembled on its throne.

She gave him one look. Oh, agony! Love—reproach—despair appealed to him to be merciful to her, to remember her even at the expense of Honor!

He looked—hesitated—tittered on the brink of a wild disclosure. Love luring him on, Love pushing him forward; when—thank God! his good angel snatched him back, whispering:

"Be true to your trust!"

He turned away, white to the lips, but smiling bravely.

"It is inevitable; I must go, indeed," said he, and taking her ice-cold, passive hand, he pressed one thrilling kiss upon it and hurried away, quite oblivious of the presence of all the others.

The dead hush was broken by Coila bursting into a passion of tears; whereupon both the gentlemen awoke from their rigid petrification and hastened to calm and soothe her.

And presently, glancing with some timidity, but with devouring curiosity at Maiblume to see how she sustained the loss of her father's secretary, Stanley had the felicity of discovering that she had quietly fainted away.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHILD PRISONER.

MR. NO-ELL WYLIE, with rare delicacy, excused himself at this juncture and disappeared like a flash.

He reached the hamlet in time to see George starting in a light wagon, with a lad to drive it, from the hostelry before mentioned; whereupon, after waiting until he was almost out of sight, Mr. Wylie, as if seized with the spirit of imitation, got himself a horse and saddle, and trotted off in pursuit.

The wagon drove at a dashing rate through

the hilly country, neither driver nor passenger looking back; and the equestrian followed, broiling under the noon sun, but seemingly quite resigned to the infliction and even enjoying it.

The sly twinkle of those rolling eyes as the hot dust rose in stifling clouds under the horse's hoofs; as he wiped the streaming perspiration from his face and neck; as the winding road took him up and up among the fir-clad hills where not a breath was stirring, and even the grasshoppers chirped faintly on the scorching soil!

The silent, chuckling triumph of the fellow, as his horse, with drooping head and reeking sides, at last walked into a bustling townlet after the wagon; as pausing in a by-street, while George dismissed his team and hurried off again on foot, he stealthily kept him in sight, till clear of the houses, he saw him judding higher and higher among the hills; as stabling his horse on the outskirts of the village, he ran after him, and slouching his hat down over his olive-colored physiognomy and muffing his chin in his scarf, he stole so near that he could distinctly see the convulsive working of George's hands, and hear his broken murmurs of despair!

All at once George stepped off the highway and plowed into the deep cedar forest through which it wound.

The artist, twisting his flexible features into a frightful grin of ecstasy, plunged in after him.

It was but a broken footpath, grown up in many places, and rendered slippery as ice, though soft as a carpet, by the deep layers of cedar spines which successive seasons had dropped upon it.

No footfall could be heard here, and the only guide which the pursuer had was the sound made by George as he pushed his way through the rustling, cracking undergrowth; yet he boldly held on his way, apparently only stimulated by fresh difficulties.

Up! up! every moment mounting higher; while the tangled briars and sharp-thorned vines scratched and tore them; while the breathless air, rank with the death odors of rotting vegetation and laden with miasma from moist, ununsunned bogs, seemed to choke them; while the green snake undulated across their path, and the big drab-coated toad hopped into the covert of yellow fungi to look out at them with black bead eyes; up! up! till Mr. Wylie was forced to divest himself of muffler and coat, and puffing and panting like a grampus, to toil on with his hand on his side; and yet George never slackened speed, and he never thought of giving up the chase!

At last, far from village, highway or path; hidden in the heart of the cedar forest on the mountain top—they came upon a ruined mansion!

"Ha!" snorted Mr. Wylie, with a very demon of glee in his eye; "now for Rosamond's bower!"

He fell behind, and sheltering himself under the tangled brake, reconnoitered the precincts and fetched his breath.

A crumbling stone house it was, built after the fashion of a Swiss *chalet*, with peaked roof, and numberless verandas. Smothered it well nigh was in the riotous luxuriant of weeds and creepers which swathed it about from broken piazza to ruined chimney; its pleasure grounds were wastes of foliage; its ornamental trees grotesque caricatures of themselves; its very windows, yawning for lack of sash or pane, were choked up with flossy vines and rank flowers.

George sat down on the piazza steps to rest and think.

Mr. Wylie took the opportunity to make the circuit, at a safe distance, of the house.

At that side which was opposite to the entrance where George sat, he observed a wonder in that desolate place—a whole window with a thin white curtain drawn across it. Some yew trees, black as night, jealously screened this marvel from all casual eyes; but Mr. Wylie's were sharp and keen as a ferret's; he saw, and burned to see more.

He crept, bit by bit through the shrouding shrubbery till he reached the window, and, hiding himself in the very heart of the yew tree opposite, he awaited results.

He was just in time; a moment afterward he heard footsteps in the room, then some one swept aside the muslin blind, and threw wide the window.

It was George, with a smile on his pale face, and pleasant words on his lips.

"Yes, early to-day, dear Aubrey; and better still, I shan't leave you again," he was saying.

Mr. Wylie almost dislocated his neck trying to see the other occupant of the room; but it was not until George turned back and bent caressingly over a large invalid chair, that the gifted artist beheld a face of perhaps thirteen, leaning back with languid hands hanging down, and sharp white face upturned. The face of a Gabriel!

Blue-eyed, pallid, golden-haired—a beautiful, an enchanting face!

Was it the sight of such unexpected grace that stirred the artist's soul so profoundly, as to leave Mr. Wylie gaping and staring at the child as if he had seen a specter? Or was it the shock of discovery, that all this loveliness could be marred in a moment by a dark and sullen frown?

"I am weary of staying here!" cried the boy, petulantly. "Why do you hide me away in this dreadful lonely place? I was better limping about the road-side, for then I could see people and I hadn't to be alone all day."

"You shan't be alone any longer my poor child," said George, arranging with gentle care the pillows behind him, and putting closer to him a little table on which stood some food, a jug of milk and a basket of fruit. "I will take you away from this place whenever you are able to travel."

"And meantime you let me pine here, you let me pine here day by day. I shall never get better!" said the boy, with a burst of angry tears. "Why do you treat me so, Mr. Laurie? what have I

"Taunt you?" murmured George. "No! No! No!"

"You only do it to remind me that I am in your power!" continued the boy, never heeding him, and plucking at his long bright hair as if he would tear it from its roots. "You keep me here, your prisoners—hidden away from every one, that you may force me to buy my freedom of you. You have found out whose child I am! I am some great person's heir—I always felt that I was—and you are hoping to make your fortune out of me!"

George recoiled from the dreadful elf-like being while a wave of bitter anguish swept over his face.

Was this the reward of his heroism? This vaunting ingratiation—these foolish reproaches! Involuntarily the concealed artist cast a keen glance about the tidy room, filled with every comfort which tender care and kind solitude could suggest. Rough only where the unskilled hands of the secretary had framed table, chair and bedstead out of the old boards which had lain there for years. But what toil, what thought, what expense had the varied items cost!

Mr. Wylie emitted a sniff of intense disgust. George must have heard the graceful sound, for, next moment, he stood at the window listening with a startled look, and entreating the boy with unsteady gesture to keep silence.

At length, satisfied that he must have been deceived, he turned back into the room and, taking a seat beside his fretful charge, took both the boy's shadowy hands within his own, and said very softly and tenderly:

"My poor Aubrey, dismiss these idle fancies from your brain; there is not the slightest foundation for them; some day I will tell you why I kept you concealed in this lonely place, but not yet—you are too young. You must be a man first, with a man's strong heart to meet sorrow right valiantly, and to overcome it by a brave and patient life."

"There is foundation for my fancy," wept the boy. "I am a lady's child; she used to come and see me; you are hiding me from her. Oh, Mr. Laurie, I'll die if you don't give me up to her, she loved me so! When she came to the home and saw me among all the other children, she ran to me crying and sobbing, and took me in her arms, and called me her beautiful boy. Oh, take me to her, or I'll run away from you as I did from the home to search for her!"

"Hugh, my child," said George, soothingly; "you speak the wildest nonsense. Whoever she was, think no more of her."

Aubrey burst into a wilder passion of tears and in the bitterest language taunted and reproached his benefactor, who became so absorbed in the task of calming him that Mr. Wylie found an opportunity of wriggling out of his uneasy resting-place and of escaping into the covert of the woods. Arrived at a point beyond the range of the chalet, he sat him down on a mossy windfall, and after elevating his eyebrows and shrugging his shoulders for some minutes in the hope of relieving his overcharged feelings, he drew from his pocket an envelope containing a number of photographs, and, shuffling over these works of art, he selected one and gazed his globular eyes upon it.

"By the jumping Jehosaphat!" exclaimed Mr. Wylie, "this is the rummest yet!"

He solemnly returned the photograph to the envelope, secreted that, and taking up the bifocal compass which dangled at his watch chain, proceeded placidly to find his way down the mountain, arriving in due course of time safe and sound at the little town. Here he took some pains to secure himself a comfortable dinner, and, having discussed the same with philosophical serenity, he trotted back to Stormoliff in the evening a much wiser man than when he had set out.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 513.)

TESTED.

BY JOHN GOSPIR.

He sung of love as though on earth
He end could never be
As though no power beneath the sun
Could sever hearts that love made one.
Above, or in the sea!

But ere the strife of life began
To prove him loyal-hearted,
She heedless spoke some blade-like word,
Which he with rising anger heard,
And hearing, straight departed!

Vials of Wrath:

THE GRAVE BETWEEN THEM.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL,
AUTHOR OF "TWO GIRLS' LIVES," "LOVE-
BLIND," "OATH-BOUND," "BARBARA'S
FATE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE SCARLET SIGN.

SEVERAL minutes elapsed after Carleton Vincy's disappearance, during which time Ethel remained sitting in weary quiet on the sofa—the first seat that offered itself as she crossed the threshold.

Her thoughts were in a strange whirl; it was so odd, so unusual, this being in the house of a friend of her—she dare not say her husband, fatefully true though she knew the words would be.

Had they discovered her sudden flight yet? She tried to shut out the mental picture of Leslie's despairing search, and Mrs. Argelyne's terror. She knew they would not find her except by the remotest shadow of a chance, and even if such a contingency arose, no human power should persuade her to return; she dare not when she knew she was yet Frank Havelstock's wife.

So she sat there, pale and still, her black dress and sack and hat making a sombre picture on which the daylight in the hall fell in dim relief; sat and waited, with a sort of vague thankfulness, that a haven of rest and retreat had so miraculously offered.

It was better than what she had hastily decided upon, in those moments of bewildering mental torture—to go to Mrs. Lawrence and accept all her contempt and sneers for the sake of shelter until she had time to think more calmly. Now, when she was capable of reasoning more calmly, Ethel was glad that she had not exposed herself to Mrs. Lawrence, glad she had been so fortunate in meeting Mr. Vincy, who, with his wife and sister, would doubtless aid her in maturing plans for her hideous future.

A quarter of an hour had elapsed, during which time Ethel had heard, occasionally, the sound of voices. There were opening of doors, and a passing up and down stairs; and then the colored woman, who had opened the door, came into the parlor with a pleasant courtesy.

"Mr. Vincy begs you to pardon him for keeping you waiting so long, but he did not know Mrs. Vincy and Miss Annie were out,

and he has been seeing to lunch for you himself—a light lunch until seven o'clock dinner, when Mrs. Vincy, he says, will be in."

Ethel bowed silently.

"Thank you; but I will wait until the ladies return. I am not at all hungry."

"Then please walk up stairs and lay off your hat and sack. You may need to fix your hair, or arrange your dress."

Ethel arose, almost mechanically.

"Very well—and please ask Mrs. Vincy to come to me as soon as she returns."

She followed the woman up stairs and into a large, delightfully-furnished room—half sitting-room, half bedroom, and a peculiar sense of restfulness stole over the girl as she entered it.

"This is Miss Annie's room, but I know you will be welcome in it. Just make yourself comfortable and I'll bring up a cup of tea."

Ethel laid off her hat and sack and gloves and lace scarf, and drew a large cushioned chair before the fire; she sat down, her face white and worn, her eyes fixed on the dull blaze in a pithy of listlessness.

A few minutes later, the serving woman appeared again with the cup of steaming tea, which she set down on a little oval marble-topped stand, and placed near Ethel's elbow; then, as she was retiring, paused near the door.

"There has a message come for Mr. Vincy which will take him away for all the evening, and he told me to ask you if you would allow him a few minutes before he goes."

The same quiet calmness never vanished for a second from Ethel's weary, white face as she assented, indifferently.

"If he particularly wishes to see me—yes."

She leaned her head back among the cushions after the door closed on the girl, and then, for the first time, there came tears to her eyes—grateful, blessed tears that cooled her scorching eyeballs, and seemed to melt the big lump in her throat that had been choking her for hours.

As Vincy's slow, deliberate step sounded on the stairs and neared the door, Ethel hastily wiped the tears from her eyes; and when the rap came, there was a quiet, low "come in" for answer.

Vincy opened the door, and partly closed it, leaving it perhaps half open; then he took a chair and seated himself on the opposite side of the fire from Ethel, who had drawn her slight figure up in her chair, in dignity of position.

Vincy took out his watch and consulted it with a grave show of importance.

"I regret exceedingly the unforeseen engagement that will take me from home this evening. I hoped to have the pleasure of introducing you to my wife, but I think you and she will be at no loss to understand each other. I have left a note for her with Julia, however, which will answer, probably."

Ethel raised her eyes slowly.

"You are very kind and thoughtful, Mr. Vincy. I feel at home and useful, already."

"I am glad you have said that, Mrs. Havelstock—it opens the way to the conversation I want with you—a personal one, of necessity. You will allow me to ask you several questions?"

Vincy was looking closely at her, and when she looked at him her beautiful eyes made his evil heart vibrate with a strange sensation.

"As many as you wish. You have befriended me, Mr. Vincy, and you shall find I am not ungrateful."

He glanced sideways at the door that was ajar, then drew his chair a little nearer Ethel's.

"I do not want the servants to gossip," he said, in a low, confiding tone. "If they once learned of your misfortune they would herald the romance far and wide, and thus most effectively prevent what I suppose you most earnestly desire—to find your recreant husband—your son I accept your theory that he is really alive."

Ethel's eyes began to blaze.

"It is no mere theory—he is alive and was at St. Ilde's church at noon to-day. But, don't misunderstand me, Mr. Vincy; I never want to see him again—never! He has used me most fearfully, most cruelly, and I never could endure even his presence again."

She spoke almost passionately in the fullness of her bitterness against him.

Vincy pretended extreme surprise.

"Is it possible you have ceased loving him? Why, my dear madam! I supposed you never would have survived his loss, much less so change in your regard for him."

A bright, red spot burned on Ethel's cheeks that contrasted widely with the deathly pallor of her face.

"I was well-nigh crushed. I was inconsolable for a long time, until—a dear old friend—"

She paused in sweet confusion; and Vincy arose and closed the door.

"Spare yourself the confession, my dear Mrs. Havelstock; let me guess what you would have said—that a dear old friend renewed his early protestations, and you found that your youth, your heart, your love were not all buried in the grave at Greenwood?"

She shivered, perceptibly.

"And I have wept over that grave so often I thought my heart was breaking, while he was rejoicing in the success that caused my agony!"

Her lips were compressed in a thin line as she thought of the dupe she had been, of the tortures she had suffered, of the torments still in store.

"I used to wonder why I forgot him so soon, why I consented to marry again so soon. I see now—nature rebelled against such a mockery of mine."

"Then you were to be married soon—your words imply that."

A moan of mortal anguish burst from her lips.

"Soon! Mr. Vincy, it was at the altar of St. Ilde's to-day, where I had just pledged my vows to Leslie Verne, that I saw his face!"

Vincy sprung from his chair in splendidly simulated surprise.

"You astound me! You were—you are married again!"

He had walked rapidly across the room, and then back to Ethel's chair, where he paused, just in front of her, with so marked a manner that she involuntarily started in her chair.

"Do you know what I want of you—why I brought you here to my house?"

She sprung to her feet, almost beside herself with sudden fright.

"Mr. Vincy, what do you mean?"

He smiled coldly, sarcastically, as he looked at her, his arms folded and his demeanor one of assurance.

"I am anxious to explain as you can be to hear the explanation. I have a theory concerning you, Mrs. Havelstock, which I never even imagined until to-day, when I saw you at the altar of St. Ilde's with—"

She gave a little cry of pain.

"You saw me there, then, and yet professed to be surprised when you learned the same fact? Mr. Vincy, you have deceived me—you are deceiving me now!"

He smiled grimly again.

"Well—yes. I presume you might call it a deception—the little fiction I invented about my wife and sister—"

Ethel sprang to her feet in a panic of fear and alarm.

"No," he continued, coolly, "that was a little joke of a remarkably practical character. Mrs. Vincy and 'Sister Annie' are myths, created for your especial benefit, and the ultimate success I intend shall crown my 'theory.'"

A cry of agonized pain was wrung from Ethel's lips.

"And you have inveigled me under your roof with pretenses of kindness and sympathy, for some selfish purpose of your own! Mr. Vincy, I shall leave this house at once. I have learned enough already to know you are everything but the friend you said you were."

She walked over to the door, her breath coming in quick respirations, her step rapid, firm. She laid her hand on the knob just as Vincy's cool words began again.

"As you say, I offered you the shelter of this roof—my own—to further my own ends. The money that pays the rent of this house I raised by my wits; through you I shall make my everlasting future."

She involuntarily paused—his words were so strange, so positive.

"I do not understand."

"I don't suppose you do. If you will sit down again I will explain."

His flimsy satisfaction was so plainly visible on his face that Ethel shivered with horror. But she answered bravely:

"I have no interest in you or your theory. You need not think to claim a reward for my appearance to my friends, which is the only way you can expect to make a fortune out of me, because I shall never return to them, for reasons I regret having allowed you to know."

"If you will only sit down a very few minutes I think I can prove to my own satisfaction as well as yours, that you have a better right under my roof than under that of any other man. All that my beautiful theory needs is the proof; and I think you can furnish it."

Ethel sent a quick, searching glance at him, while her soul seemed fairly dying within her. It seemed to her she was bora purposely for trouble. She seemed a blight both to herself and to her friends. Had she not already borne enough?

She walked tremblingly back to the chair, and leaned wearily against the high Gothic back, Vincy watching her with an increasing satisfaction in his eyes.

"Every movement, every look, every gesture adds strength to the conviction that flashed over me this morning when I saw the horror in your eyes when you met Havelstock's glance. Don't be agitated—I am not."

She never took her eyes off his face, or presumed to answer. He went on more eagerly.

"Has it ever been your experience to meet accidentally a person who reminded you so strongly of another that the impression could not be shaken off? That has been my experience to-day, and so keen, so strong, so positive is the impression, that I have brought you here for the one reason of proving my suspicions. If they are correct—my fortune is made. Do you then wonder at my boldness in carrying out my design?"

He approached her.

"All I ask of you is, that you will raise the sleeve of your left arm, and let me see if there is there what I am looking for."

The knowledge of the little scarlet mark was so well known to Ethel that his words elicited no wonder.

"There is a birthmark on my left arm, just below my elbow. A small bright red mark."

"Saints and devils! there is, really? Let me see, girl! the very admission on your part gives me the right to see it."

She hesitated, and Vincy grasped her arm tightly, sweeping the sleeve to her elbow in his hot haste, and revealing the little, irregular mark on her white, rounded arm.

A glow of intense excitement was in his eyes as he gazed on it as if fascinated.

Then he dropped her wrist, and looked exultantly in her indignant, anxious face.

"It is 'confirmation strong as proof of holy writ.' Do you know who you are?"

"Who I am? do you mean to ask me if I know the secret of my parentage?"

A gleam of excitement dawned in her eyes.

"I mean just that. Being Havelstock's friend, I of course knew you were only the adopted child of a party whose name has escaped me. The first time I saw you, your eyes haunted me as being very like some one's; to-day I could have sworn you were her as I saw her once—years and years ago."

Ethel's heart was beating with painful force; she tried to realize she was on the very verge of the knowledge she had prayed for, all her life—the knowledge of her parentage.

"Do you know who I am? Can you tell me—will you?"

She clasped her hands involuntarily in a gesture of eager entreaty, and her dark eyes were full of beseeching entreaty.

He smiled exultantly.

"Yes. I can tell you."

He paused after the curt, positive sentence; and Ethel waited, with wildly-pulsing heart, for the revelation, every second seeming an hour while she waited.

At length Vincy answered; his voice full of the triumphant satisfaction of the moment.

"I told you I would prove you had a better right under my roof than under any other—because you are my own child; because I am your father!"

She started in a tremor of perfect bewilderment.

"Your child! I—your child—I—the daughter of a man who can deceive as you have done! Oh, God be pitiful! You—my father!"

Vincy quailed under the freight of pitiful contempt in her words.

"It isn't a matter of congratulation, is it? especially to yourself."

She made no answer, but the blankest disappointment, regret, disgust, were plainly to be read in her white face, and wide-open, gloomy eyes.

It made Vincy wince—the speechless admission of their relationship.

"It can't be helped, that I can see, so that there is no use of wasting time in grieving about it."

"But—but—my mother who is my mother? where is she?"

She laid such unconsciously contrasting emphasis on the pronoun, that Vincy became sullen.

"That's not in the bargain—find out yourself. It is enough for you to know you are the very child who was left with the Merrills, to be nursed, and who deserted you, by leaving you at the door of the family who took you."

Ethel's voice rose in piteous entreaty.

"For humanity's sake, tell me if she is dead, or if living, where she is. Give me a chance to find her!"

Vincy smiled grimly.

"What would you say to know your mother—was a dainty, high-bred lady, with the face of an angel and the voice of a seraph? would you like to see her—who has mourned you dead these years and years? would you like to meet her, and know her in her home of magnificence and luxury?"

"He watched her pure, wistful face with the relish a cat is supposed to enjoy while it watches the luckless mouse."

He saw her lips move in entreaty, then he answered:

"But you won't. I hate her, and before I'd give her the satisfaction of knowing her baby was alive—I'd see you both killed before my eyes."

He was becoming enraged—with the thoughts of Georgia.

"I might tell you further revelations—that would strike you dumb with horror, but I will reserve them for the future—when I will see you again. Until which time—you are my prisoner."

He walked past her, without a glance at her sweet, piteous face; passed quickly through the door, and locked it on the outside.

Ethel sunk on her knees by the bedside.

CHAPTER L.

THE LOST BIRD.

LESS than a minute after Ethel had quietly closed the hall door after her, Mrs. Argelyne and Leslie had arisen from the dining room table where they had been partaking of a cup of coffee—the first food with which they broke the long fast since morning.

Leslie pushed back his chair, as he arose.

"I will see if she is awake, aunt Helen—shall I not? She wouldn't care, would she?"

Mrs. Argelyne shook her head.

"I think I had better go, Leslie. She may be dressing if she has wakened feeling recovered. Be patient a little longer."

She gave him a little motherly caress as she passed him into the hall, and he smiled at her—the last smile on his handsome face for many a weary day.

Mrs. Argelyne went up stairs and tapped on Ethel's door, waiting a second for an answer.

None coming she rapped again a little harder, and then pushed open the door and entered.

Her first glance revealed the fact that Ethel was not in the bed, or even in the room. A second, discovered the marriage ring hanging on the toilet cushion—a mute witness that something out of the ordinary was transpiring in their very midst; then, a hasty glance in the disordered bureau drawer, the absence of Ethel's pocket-book from the little box where she habitually kept it, and whose lid lay on the floor, sent a thrill of vague, mysterious terror through every nerve of her body.

As she stood by the open drawer with her limbs trembling under her, and a great, speechless surprise slowly forming on her face, Mrs. Argelyne thought of the utter improbability of the horror that had flashed over her—the dread that Ethel had arisen in a crazed condition and wandered off.

"I am nervous to-day, to entertain such fancies. Of course Ethel has gone in my room, or some of the spare rooms—perhaps she was too warm here, or she may have gone to the bathroom. What a fool I was to take the alarm so ridiculously soon! How Leslie and Ethel will laugh when I tell them!"

She sunk in Ethel's little blue chair, feeling weak and trembling with the nervous excitement she had undergone, and conscious of a sense of delightful relief.

She sat several minutes, waiting for Ethel's return; once, when she glanced toward the open bureau drawer, she smiled involuntarily.

"To think I should have entertained such childish suspicions for a moment, merely on account of a missing pocket-book, when the most natural thing in the world for Ethel to have done was to have put it in her pocket!"

She waited several minutes more, then, went after Ethel, with a tender scolding on her lips for daring to leave her room alone.

She passed the open doors of her own apartments, and saw them vacant of Ethel's presence. She hurried on to the bath-room, a grave anxiety coming into her face, as she pushed open the door, in the confident expectation of seeing Ethel at the toilet stand.

To her surprise, then, instantly in a vague alarm, she saw the bath-room also empty.

She sunk helplessly down on a little cushioned chair, her eyes full of terrified amazement.

"Can it be that my first suspicions are true? Is there something below and beyond Ethel's mysterious illness that is so awful it has driven her from home, friends—husband! Poor Leslie—God pity him!"

She arose wearily, as if there was no further need to hasten to find Ethel. She mechanically looked in every room in the house, with a pained fear and bewilderment on her face, that deepened in to downright anguish of spirit.

"What will he say—my patient, loving boy, whose whole soul was wrapped in her, whose human happiness so completely depended on her! How shall I tell him!"

She paused at the head of the stairs, wringing her hands in a very terror of trouble.

"It must be done, at once, and I must do it, at once. How culpably wicked I am to allow any time to elapse, in my imbecile distress, while Ethel—"

She dared not finish the dread sentence. She went on down the stairs, slowly, but unhappily, bearing her burden of woe, and misery to the unconscious husband below.

At the foot of the stairs, Leslie met her—his face full of radiant expectation.

"How long you have been, auntie! I have been—my God! what has happened?"

The joyousness disappeared at the very first glance at Mrs. Argelyne's face, and a swift gray pallor surged over his own.

He reached out his hand and grasped her arm.

"Don't keep me waiting! tell me the worst! I see it on your face—she is dead!"

His voice quivered as he spoke—quivered with mortal pain.

Mrs. Argelyne looked wistfully in his eyes.

"Can you bear the very worst?"

"Only hurry! for heaven's sake put me out of this suspense!"

He looked like a man twenty years older as he waited for the doom in her words.

"She is not dead—I think she has recovered entirely—but be brave, be hopeful, Leslie—she has gone!"

Leslie bowed bewildered.

"Gone? Ethel gone? Where—what for?"

"I cannot tell, I do not know—only she has disappeared and left no trace."

Like a flash, Leslie sprang up the staircase and into Ethel's room, Mrs. Argelyne following.

He looked around, a pitiful helplessness in his eyes for a moment as he saw the empty bed, with the impress of Ethel's dainty head on the lace-frilled pillow, at the wedding-dress, lying carelessly over a chair, whither it had been thrown in the excitement of the

strange coming home; at the traveling-suit of brown silk and cashmere lying so carefully beside the light felt hat, where Ethel herself had

Hugh studied it intently.
"Has she any peculiarity of manner? any birth-mark?"
"I think I have heard aunt Helen speak of a little scarlet mark on her arm, just below the elbow. I never saw it myself."
Hugh wrote on his tablets again; then looked at his watch, as he arose.
"Mrs. Verne has an hour's start of us, but I am confident I will have news for you this time to-morrow. Don't give up, Mr. Verne; it'll all turn out right yet—my word for it."
He pressed Leslie's hand cordially, as he bade him good by.
(To be continued—commenced in No. 298.)

NEVER MIND.

What's the use of always fretting
At the trials we shall find,
Ever straining along our pathway?
Travel on, and never mind.
Travel onward—working, hoping,
Cast no lingering glance behind,
At the trials once encountered,
Look ahead, and never mind.
What is passed is past forever;
Let all fretting be resigned;
It will never help the matter—
Do your best, and never mind.
Friendly words are often spoken
When the feelings are unkind,
Take them for their real value—
Pass them by, and never mind.
And if those who might befriend you,
Whom the ties of nature bind,
Should refuse to do their duty,
Look to Heaven, and never mind.

JACK RABBIT,

The Prairie Sport:

OR,
THE WOLF-CHILDREN OF THE LLANO ESTACADO.BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.,
AUTHOR OF "OLD BULL'S-EYE," "YELLOW-
STONE JACK," "PACIFIC PETE," ETC.CHAPTER XXXIV.
UNITED AND SEVERED.

The falling of the severed things leaving the prisoner apparently free and at entire liberty, the yell and angry rush of Black Tiger, the foiling of his aim by Mini Lusa and the lightning-like blow of the young scout, the bold leap for freedom, the mad yells of the Pawnees as they rushed to avenge the fall of their leader—all occupied but the space of a breath.

Tony Chew, revolver in hand, bounded forward to meet the fugitives and cover their retreat, a movement which was promptly imitated by Keoxa and his braves, yelling and plying their bows with vigor enough for double their number.

Despite the haste with which his leap was taken, Jack Rabbit alighted safely among the rocks below, holding Mini Lusa clear of the ground, then, leaping over the still quivering body of the Mad Chief, the young couple ran as fast as the tangled trail would admit toward their eager friends.

What the result would have been had not the Mad Chief fallen and left the Pawnees to their own devices, had instant and persistent pursuit been made, Jack and Mini must have been captured or slain; but instead, the Wolf-children gathered around the form of Black Tiger, who now gave signs of returning consciousness.

It was with a wild, almost breathless joy that the brother scouts clasped hands once more, and though no words were spoken, each perfectly understood the other.

"We must fall back, old man Tony," muttered Jack. "Those imp can run right over us here—back to the opening—chief, fall back!"

The young adventurer's orders were promptly obeyed, and once more the Comanches and their white allies were gathered together near the center of the circular valley. Stern and ready they awaited the coming shock, though as yet the Pawnees were upon the hillside, but Black Tiger had arisen and was now angrily gestulating, probably cursing the stupidity of his braves. At least they covered before him like one who, being bitterly reviled, dares not reply.

"Mini," said Jack, his lips almost touching the maiden's ear. "Mini, darling, you will not steal away from me again! You are mine—all mine now!"

"All yours—now and forever," came the low reply, so gently whispered that only a lover's ears could have interpreted the soft murmur.

The loud war-cry of the Mad Chief now rung out, and then the Pawnees charged over the rocks and into the level ground.

As before they were met with a steady, deliberately-aimed storm of bullets and arrows; as before, though their regular front was broken, the Wolf-children faltered not, pressing forward to close quarters, flung by the example of their mad leader. His eyes were riveted upon the little knot of whites around whom the Comanches had closed at a sign from Keoxa.

Then came the shock as the rival bodies met. Once more weapons clashed loudly together, men fell dead or dying, and the hot, steaming blood stood in little pools upon the trampled soil. Hand to hand, breast to breast, dealing blow for blow with dogged ferocity, scorned to yield an atom even when plainly over-matched—thus the contest raged. It was a series of duels, where the vanquished received death, where the victor, never pausing for a second breath, immediately engaged a more successful foe.

For several minutes the scales were evenly balanced. The rivals fought with wonderful obstinacy. The Pawnees were led by Black Tiger, whose arm none seemed able to withstand, yet who was repeatedly baffled by Keoxa, who kept his best braves massed between the Mad Chief and the objects of his vengeance.

But then the terrible effects of the rapidly detonating revolvers became more and more plain, the foremost of the Wolf-children melting away before the scouts' aim in swift succession, until the odds were upon the other side, and the Comanches began forcing the Pawnees back.

Mini Lusa stood between Jack and Tony, and to her presence beyond a doubt Black Tiger was indebted for his life. Had it been otherwise a deftly-planted bullet would have terminated the struggle at once and forever.

Still stubbornly contesting every foot of ground, the Pawnees were slowly forced back toward the rocks whence they had descended, leaving a trail of blood behind them, yet not all their own. Wounded and bleeding freely, Black Tiger seemed to be losing his marvelous power with every moment.

Keoxa was just gathering his braves for one final rush which was to end all, when a shrill yell, mingled with the heavy and rapid thud of horses' hoofs caused him to glance back to-

ward the entrance to the basin. The vision was not a pleasant one to his eyes.

Full half a hundred mounted warriors were pouring into the circular valley, brandishing their weapons and pealing forth the shrill, unearthly war-whoop of the Pawnees.

"To the pocket! We can't fight 'em—to the pocket!" yelled Jack Rabbit, encircling Mini Lusa's waist with one arm. "Look to the others, old man Tony—quick! or the dogs will manage to cut us off yet!"

No one thought of disputing his order—there was no time for doing so, even if each had not realized that in the pocket lay their only hope of escape. And keeping close together, with the buffalo-hunter and his wife still in the center, they rushed rapidly across the valley.

Black Tiger also sprang forward, yelling for the mounted braves to cut off the fugitives, but his words were almost drowned by the wild clamor, and the favorable moment was allowed to pass unimproved.

Abruptly wheeling as the entrance was gained, Keoxa and his braves covered the whites as they hastily entered, then, with a final volley of arrows, the Comanches followed, taking advantage of the cover afforded by the thick-lying boulders.

Mad with rage and baffled revenge, Black Tiger urged his braves on. Dismounting, they scrambled over the rocks under a galling fire from the concealed Comanches. But the question was decided when Tony and Jack opened fire with their hastily reloaded pistols. Unable to strike a blow in return, the Pawnees hastily retreated, confident in the knowledge that their enemy could not escape them, feeling that their vengeance was only delayed, not eluded.

Keoxa was also grimly satisfied. He knew that his braves could keep the Pawnees out were they twice as numerous, until starvation came to the Wolf-children's aid. And long before that period the yell of the Great Eagle would fill the air and his braves raise the siege. And then, having stationed his braves, he lighted his pipe and was soon enjoying the pleasant narcotic as thoroughly as though in his own lodge.

Jack and Tony were together, having placed Mini Lusa in the niche with Senora Raymon. The old scout was looking unusually grave, evidently deep buried in thought. Jack, on the contrary, was smiling and so full of joy that he wished some one to share it with him. The giant borderer bore his sallies for a time in gloomy quiet, but then, as though casting aside all doubts, he raised his hands and moved them rapidly. At first Jack uttered a little cry of wonder, and doubt was plainly written upon his face, but this expression vanished as the fingers moved more rapidly. When they ceased he arose and motioned Chew to follow him, his face pale and fixed, his limbs trembling beneath him as he finally stood before Senora Raymon.

"Tell her all—no, she cannot understand you. Tell your story and I will read it off. Now—quick!"

The fingers moved rapidly. Word by word Jack Rabbit interpreted the mute speech, his voice sounding hard and strained. In breathless silence the woman listened. While the shades of night deepened, the stars came out, the moon arose and cast its silvery beams down into the defile.

The story was a long one, slowly narrated. A brief synopsis will be all that needs recording here.

Many long years ago, a hunter, unarmed, weary and footsore, with wounds yet unhealed, was resting himself upon a hillside, when shrill cries, mingled with wild bursts of laughter and the sounds of blows, awakened his drooping senses. Stealing forward he saw a cruel scene. A man, a giant in height and strength, armed to the teeth, was flogging a little child with a quirt, until his limbs were bruised and bleeding. Unarmed though he was, the hunter would have interfered, but as though weary of his cruel sport, the brute dropped his whip and pushed the child into a hole in the hillside, fastening the entrance with a couple of heavy stones, then mounting his horse and riding away. As soon as he vanished the hunter pushed aside the rocks and brought out the sobbing child, leaving the spot as rapidly as his weakened form would admit. The child told him that the "bad man" had stolen him away from home, but could not tell his parents' names.

That night delirium seized upon the hunter, and for many a long day he knew nothing. When he recovered he was lying in the rude jacale of an Indian, the child playing beside him. It was months before he could stand upon his feet. When he regained strength, he sought in vain for the parents of the child. No one could guide him. Day by day his love for the little one grew until he no longer cared to find its family. Yet he had a mission to work out, and could not always bear the child with him, so he sought out a friend who was returning to the States and entrusted him with his treasure. Years passed. The child became a young man, handsome, brave and well taught. And then the borderer told how he had learned the parents of his foundling. How he struggled with his love until a sense of justice triumphed.

"The child stands before you. When I found him, this chain and locket were around his neck," concluded Chew, producing the article named from his possible sack.

Senora Raymon uttered a faint cry and fainted. She realized now how bitterly they had been deceived by the Mad Chief, who, on discovering the loss of the real heir, had substituted another body, mutilated beyond recognition.

While Jack and Mini Lusa were endeavoring to restore Senora Raymon, Tony caught sight of a dark, creeping figure, and flung forward his rifle. But he did not fire. Just in time came a low signal which he recognized, and a moment later Manketo gently deposited a limp, seemingly lifeless body at his feet, and feebly rose erect as Keoxa came forward.

"Manketo has been drinking fire-water, that he cannot stand straight!" sharply began the chief.

"He is drunk with the blood of Pawnee dogs," proudly replied the brave, turning so that the moon shone full upon the ghastly wounds that seamed his chest.

At that moment Senora Raymon sprang forward and fell upon the motionless body, covering the pale, upturned face with kisses. It was that of Pablo Raymon.

"You come back alone?" slowly uttered Keoxa.

"Yes. I carried him. The others died—striking the enemy. So would I, only for him. He is too brave for a Pawnee dog to dance over his scalp."

A wild yell came from the hilltop, and then a huge boulder crashed heavily down the slope.

CHAPTER XXXV.

BESIEGED.

WHEN the rifle-shot came, followed by the

wild yells as the suddenly-aroused Pawnees sprang to their feet, Leon Sandoval naturally supposed the shot was fired at him—that some one of the savages had been aroused by his bold exploit. With this belief his first thought was to flee, and he even took several steps toward the spot where he had parted from Rosina; but then he paused. Better die fighting where he stood than lead the savage hounds to a second and more helpless victim. And dropping food and drink, he prepared to dispute their passage while his arms could wield a weapon.

But the hubbub gradually subsided, and none of the savages left the outer chamber, at least in Sandoval's direction. Hopes revived, and with it came curiosity. The young buffalo-hunter crept cautiously forward until he could peer around the curve. He saw the Pawnees were quieted down, some talking, others smoking their freshly-filled pipes. It was all a puzzle to him, though ere long he made a shrewd guess at the truth; that one of the somnolent sentinels had dropped his carbine and the shock had discharged it.

Satisfied that there was no hope of leaving the cavern by this outlet, at least until the Indians had left, Leon, with new cause for fear, cautiously returned to where he left Rosina. Though a silent, it was a joyous meeting. She had heard the shot, and naturally feared lest it had been discharged at her lover.

In cautious whispers Sandoval told her of his discoveries.

"We must find some good hiding-place where we can lie concealed until they leave. There's danger in every moment we spend here—some one of them might chance along, and once they get scent of us, nothing would satisfy them but our lives. Come, darling—keep close behind me—we must feel our way, for time at last."

Not daring to light a torch, Sandoval cautiously groped his way through the dark, sounding the ground before him with one of the fagots still remaining, to guard against an accident similar to that which had befallen Pablo. Thus, with one hand gliding along the side wall while the other felt his way, Leon proceeded for some minutes.

Next to having found the chamber which opened out upon the hillside, unoccupied, this forced retreat in the dark was the most fortunate thing that could have happened to the fugitives, though, at the time, it would have been difficult to convince Leon that such was the case.

As he groped along through the darkness, Sandoval was guided by the side wall, and, as a natural consequence, he diverged into the first passage branching from that side, nor did he discover the fact, his senses being so fully occupied, and listening with painful intensity for the sounds which he prayed would not come—the yell of discovery and pursuit.

The hunter's hand suddenly slid from the wall. Feeling around, he found—by the sharp corners—that they stood upon the verge of a chamber or enlargement of the passage. Then a low cry from Rosina startled him.

"Seel a light—above our heads!"

Sandoval raised his eyes, and his heart throbbed with painful force. Above them—how high he could only conjecture—was a light spot, in the exact center of which glowed and twinkled a bright star. There could be no mistake—they were gazing upon the outer world!

Almost fearing to remove his eyes from the glorious vision, Sandoval bade Rosina remain motionless and await his return. Then he moved slowly about, until he fully satisfied himself that the opening was no delusion, that it was near the center of the roof or vault of the chamber in which they stood. Groping his way back, he said:

"We must pass through that, Rosina, and the sooner the better. And yet—we must have light to guide us. It will be a risk—though we have come a good way from where we stumbled across the heathen."

"Do as you think best—I trust you in everything," simply replied the maiden.

"Thank you, pet. It is a risk we must run, if we hope to see our friends once more. Aided by a light and my lasso, I believe I can climb up there, and if the rope is only long enough—but it must be! Once up there, I can haul you up—and then, good-by to the bloody-minded heathen and ho! for our friends!"

"Holy Mother, grant that it may turn out as you say!" murmured Rosina.

Sandoval crouched down close to the wall and prepared to strike a light. His efforts were successful, and a few minutes later his torch was blazing brightly.

First assisting Rosina to a perch upon a little ledge, some yards above the level of the floor, Leon began his work. This was slow and difficult. The torch cast its rays but a few feet, and beyond this all was conjecture. Sandoval was obliged to cast his lasso around the highest visible point, then climb up to it, perhaps to find his labor all in vain and have to retrace his steps. Still, he knew that it must be done—he was working for even more than life, and with dogged perseverance he stuck faithfully to his task until, when the gray light of morning streamed in at the hole, he reached the opening and crawled through it.

"Ah, what a blessed moment was that!" Yet one hasty glance around, and he permitted himself. Returning, he dropped the lasso at full length. It lacked full a dozen feet of reaching the floor—as well a mile. So at least he thought, bitterly, in his first disappointment.

But then his strong common sense returned. Peering down from his perch he saw how the feat could be accomplished, with patience. Cautiously he descended to the point of rock from which he had reached the entrance, and thus to another, making use of his faithful lasso.

He directed Rosina to descend to the floor, and then explained to her how she was to secure the noose around her body. In silence, confiding implicitly in her lover, Rosina obeyed, and then, slowly, cautiously, straining every muscle, Sandoval drew up his precious load, foot by foot, until her round arms clasped his neck and her moist lips gratefully, lovingly pressed a kiss upon his.

The most difficult part of the task was over, and in ten minutes later the lovers stood side by side upon the mountain, breathing the fresh morning air, reveling in the rays of the glorious sun.

Rosina sunk upon her knees and breathed a silent, heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving. Sandoval uncovered his bowed head in mute reverence.

"And now," he said, at length, breaking the silence, "come—every moment will seem an hour to your friends until you rejoin them."

"To carry black sorrow to their hearts—poor, poor Pablo!" murmured Rosina, her eyes moistening.

Leon drew her to his breast, pressing his lips to her brow. He knew how vain and empty words of consolation would sound, and did not attempt them, but gently drew her

along in the direction which his hunter's instinct told him they must follow in order to regain the wagon train.

He did not forget the Indians whom he had seen. Knowing that, in all probability they were still near at hand, he used all possible precautions against discovery, keeping under cover of the boulders and stunted bushes as much as he could, scanning the rocks and points around with a keen, restless gaze.

And yet, all his precautions were of little avail.

When they had passed over nearly a mile of ground, Sandoval dropped suddenly to the ground, dragging Rosina with him. The forms of half a dozen savages had come into view around a huge boulder, not three hundred yards away, directly in their course.

Quick and prompt as was his action, it was too late to avert discovery. A wild yell, bloodthirsty and malignant, burst from the savages, and brandishing their weapons they leaped toward the fugitives.

With an arm around Rosina's waist, Sandoval arose and turned to flee. Not at random. Knowing that such a chase must be short—that a collision must soon come, he headed at once for a covert from which he might hope to make a good fight, and if not defeat the enemy, at least hold them in check until the sounds of firing should attract her friends to the rescue. Had he only known how hardly those friends were even then bested!

The Pawnees gained rapidly, but fortunately the fugitives had not far to go. A huge boulder, with three sides almost perpendicular, its top covered with stunted bushes, the fourth side barely sloping and ragged enough for a nimble, sure-footed man to scale—such was the natural fort which Sandoval had noticed in passing, little thinking how soon he would have to test its efficacy.

Clambering up the rock, assisting Rosina before him, the buffalo-hunter turned and drew a bead upon the foremost of his pursuers. True to its aim, the bullet sped upon its errand of death. With a shrill, horrible yell of agony, the Indian sprang into the air, falling to the earth a quivering, lifeless mass of clay.

Yelling madly, the Pawnees came on, burning for revenge—on until they reached the rock—still on, climbing, clinging to every point of rock—thinking only of the feast of blood which awaited them above.

Given no time to reload, Sandoval stooped and grasped one of the rocks at his feet. This he dashed upon the head of the nearest savage, with such force that the skull was shattered like an egg-shell. Another followed, and with like effect. The face of the rock was cleared as by magic, under the influence of the blood-stained stones and the convulsed bodies. As though dismayed by the loss of half their number in little more than as many seconds, the survivors sprang behind the nearest cover, giving the buffalo-hunter a much needed respite.

He crouched down beside Rosina, hastily loading his rifle, not knowing at what moment it might be needed.

"Listen!" cried Rosina. "Our friends—" The distant sound of rifle-shots—the shrill yells; mingled with duller rumbling, crashing sounds—could now be heard. Sandoval grated his teeth together. He knew now that there was nothing to hope for from the train. Beyond a doubt they were attacked by savages, and had their hands full.

Again Rosina called his attention—this time pointing afar off over the distant desert. A dust-cloud was visible, steadily increasing. Then it was partially dispelled, revealing the forms of horsemen—of long lances and floating trappings.

"God help them now!" muttered Leon. "More of the blood-thirsty heathen are coming."

An exultant yell from the Pawnees below interrupted him.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE GREAT EAGLE.

PALE and haggard, yet stern and almost stonily calm were the faces upon which the first rays of the morning sun shone, down in the half-filled pocket. As a cat plays with a mouse, so the Pawnees seemed amusing themselves—at intervals hurling down a huge boulder, or dispatching an arrow or bullet upon its mission of death—then relapsing into perfect silence, until it seemed impossible that so many blood-thirsty heathen were lurking around the rocky fastness.

Jack Rabbit—for such we must still call him—lay curled up at the feet of his mother, sleeping, completely exhausted by his long watching and anxiety. Senora Raymon was watching over the deep, death-like slumber of her wounded son, Pablo, trembling lest his waking should be only in death.

Mini Lusa crouched down in a little niche, close beside Jack Rabbit—her eyes were riveted upon his face with a gaze that could not be mistaken. Of rapid growth, of curious birth, the strength of their love could not be measured in words. Fiery, burning, yet pure, it could only find an end in death—if then.

Tony Chew stood near by, his eyes also upon the face of his idolized pupil and comrade. There was a nervous twisting of his lips, a sad, regretful look in his eyes that told how immense was the sacrifice he had made in giving Jack back to his people.

And thus the minutes rolled on. Keoxa, the Comanche chief, sprang erect, his head bent in listening. The faint report of a rifle—the sounds of wild yells; these his ear caught, and for a moment a strange fire lighted up his face, as he thought of his father—the Great Eagle. But no—these sounds were receding. It could not be the Great Eagle.

There came a loud, crashing thud as a boulder was started from above, leaping, bounding madly from point to point. Keenly was its course watched by the besieged, and all hearts gave a thankful throb as they believed it would fall clear of them. It strikes upon a rock—rebounds swiftly at an abrupt angle. One shrill cry of horror—drawn in voluntarily from a stout brave's lips as he saw inevitable death—then the boulder concealed all.

The hills seemed full of swarming devils. From every side—save one alone—came wild, ear-splitting screams. The rocky avalanche was renewed—rifle-shots and arrows filled the air. Pandemonium seemed loosed upon earth.

High and shrill arose the young chief's warning cry. He had not overlooked the significant fact that no sound came from the entrance to the pocket. And with his knowledge of Indian craft, he felt sure that all this uproar was but a blind to cover some more deadly attack.

"The Pawnee wolves are fools—they think their yelling will blind us! Strike home, my braves! They come to find death at the hands of men!"

His last words were blended with the re-

port of the dumb scout's rifle, carrying death to a skulking redskin. Thus unmasked, the Pawnees abandoned their hope of a surprise, and yelling in horrible chorus, scrambled over the rocks, resolved to end all by one desperate charge and hand to hand struggle.

On they came, despite the cracking of rifles, the twanging of bow-strings, the crashing of boulders. And from the heights above, dropping from point to point with the activity and sure-footedness of a mountain sheep, the Wolf-children hastened to the aid of their brethren, eager to play their part in the dread tragedy.

The rapidly detonating revolver joined in the deadly play. Fragments of rock were hurled by stout hands otherwise unarmed. And still the Pawnees came on—nearer and nearer, until the struggle became hand to hand. Rifles and muskets were clubbed, hatchets and knives clinked together. Breast to breast the desert rivals strove for mastery. Tight locked in each other's arms they struggled, tight locked in each other's arms they died, victors yet vanquished.

It was a duel to the death. Not one of them all, even when death stared them in the face, dreamed of asking or receiving mercy. Life and defeat could not join hands.

Side by side fought the trio: Keoxa, Jack Rabbit and the dumb scout. There alone the Wolf-children were beaten back. And there a rampart of dead steadily grew in height before the heroes.

Yet numbers will prevail. Where one Pawnee fell, two others sprang into the space left vacant by his death. Not so with the defenders. Each death-groan left them more ground to cover—more blows to withstand, a greater pressure to bear up against.

Such a terrible, killing struggle could not last long. One by one the defenders fell. Not one among the survivors but bore some trace of the Wolf-children's claws. Slowly but surely they were being overpowered.

Ha! what is that? Two lightning bolts dispose of his most troublesome antagonists, and then Keoxa lifts his head, his eyes flashing, his nostrils dilating. His voice rises—high above the devilish tumult.

And then—the answer comes! Shrill and piercing, almost unearthly in its notes—the shriek of an eagle—the war-cry of Quantlil, of Great Eagle, the head chief of the Comanches!

Only too well do the Wolf-children know that yell! Often has it sounded in their ears—as often followed by sore wailing and bitter mourning among the Pawnee lodges.

They think no more of fighting. Casting aside their weapons, everything that can impede their flight, they clamber frantically up the rocks. But death follows them close. The tables are turned, and now the fugitives become the pursued. The dumb scout, Keoxa, and Jack Rabbit lead. And guided by the cries of the young chief, the fresh Comanches speedily effect a surround.

It becomes a massacre. The details are too bloody—too revolting for record here. Enough that from that day the band of the notorious Black Tiger was no more.

Once more it is day. Once more the circular valley is thickly peopled.

In one group are collected the most of our friends. Jack Rabbit holds Mini Lusa by the hand, and he stands before his mother.

"Not only a son, but a daughter—will you welcome her, my mother?"

Senora Raymon, her eyes yet wet with mourning over the loss of her husband, drew the sobbing maiden to her motherly breast and pressed a kiss upon her brow.

"God bless you both, my children!" "And may I, too, hope for a share in your blessing?" said Leon Sandoval, uncovering his head as he drew Rosina to him.

"And I'm the only solitary one!" laughed Pablo faintly from his couch of robes. "But have patience, mother dear—I'll find you another daughter as soon as we get back home again—never fear!"

Need there more be said? Why follow the long trail? Enough that it was successfully made under the escort of Keoxa—that Pablo recovered from his wounds—that the lovers were married—that Tony Chew found a peaceful home with Jack and Mini Lusa until death bade him take up the last, long trail.

EPICURE—WHAT THE VULTURE SAW.
Its wings brushing the clouds, its eyes turned downward, slowly circling around, each turn carrying it nearer the earth, sailed a vulture in the first rays of the morning sun.

Rough, ragged hills, rock-covered, split into huge fragments, with yawning chasms here and there, deep, black abysses—a scene of desolation. Yet 'tis inhabited.

Two men—their apparel torn, soiled and stained dark with blood. One is lying prostrate, bound hand and foot. A look of utter horror is upon his face.

A rattlesnake crawling closely by, pauses, coils, sounds its alarm and bends back its lance-shaped head to strike. The standing man springs forward and crushes it beneath his heel, laughing discordantly.

"Thank me for your life, Felipe Raymon!" The bound man shuddered and could not suppress a groan of agony.

Again laughing, the madman grasped his victim, and held him half-suspended over the dark pit. From the gloom came a chilling, blood-curdling sound. Through the darkness glow and scintillate scores of twin points of light. Combined with the skirring noise, the scintillation is plain.

A groan of horror—a faint prayer for mercy—a discordant laugh. And the dark-winged scavenger swoops still lower.

The madman now works with an ardor resembling frenzy. He binds the end of a stout lasso around the doomed man's feet. The other extremity he winds around a large boulder. He severs the bands around his victim's wrists. He hurls him fiercely forward. A shriek of horror from the victim's lips—a dull twang as the rope is extended.

The madman leans far over the pit, laughing shrilly. He sees the swaying body—the aroused serpents rattling angrily and leaping at the wretch from every side, and then—

A portion of the rock gives way beneath him. Vainly he seeks to recover his balance. Down—down! One despairing cry—a dull thud!

The vulture swoops lower, and settles upon a point of rock, peering eagerly down through the gloom. Twice he is startled from his perch by the muffled, choking shrieks—as often does he return.

Then all is still. The vulture floats down and settles to its feast.

THE END.

JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.'S next serial, "LITTLE VOLCANO, THE BOY MINER, or, LIFE AMONG THE LAWLESS," is now in hand to appear in due time. It is an exceedingly strong story in a field in which Mr. Badger is unsurpassable.

THE DEMON OF THE RAIL.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

He was a man of giant strength
Cast in a mighty mold;
The rays of fire that lit his eyes
Were awful to behold.

I shuddered as I looked at him,
And longed to flee away,
But frozen there with deadly fright
I was compelled to stay.

I marked his brow o'erspread with rage,
I heard him gnash his teeth;
I saw him stamp his awful feet
Which shook the ground beneath.

And as the train came thundering in
I feared lest in his might
He'd hurl the engine from the track
And kill the folk outright.

I marked the demon as the train
Stopped at the depot there;
I saw him spit upon his hands
And begin to tear his hair!

And then he grasped a ponderous trunk
Which seemed quite firmly bound,
And tossed it high into the air—
It crashed upon the ground.

He saw that but one end was cracked;
Not satisfied with that,
He chugged it on a smaller trunk
And mashed it very flat.

He slammed valises twenty feet
Against the platform's edge;
Whatever was breakable in them
He shattered in his rage.

The sight of all the baggage there
Seems to have set him crazed;
The passengers who owned the trunks
Could but look on amazed.

The wooden trunks like handboxes
He crumbled with a bound;
It looked just like a shipwreck there
For fifty feet around.

At last he spied a leather trunk
Which angered him the more,
He crashed it fiercely on the ground
And terribly raved and swore.

He stamped it with his iron heels
And cursed his woe! he said;
He struck it with his heavy ledge
And banged it with a truck.

The demon there had found his match,
Of trucks this was the worst;
Do what he would with all his might
It would not break nor burst.

He drew his pistol forth, resolved
"Go upon the shelf!"
He fired three balls into that trunk
And three into himself.

Married To Order.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"CLARENCE—I've not a morsel of patience left with you! I declare I wish you had died when you were a baby, so I would have been spared so much trouble on your account."

Old Miss Angelina Caryl frowned as exasperated as she could, over her gold-rimmed glasses at her handsome nephew, who laughed boldly back.

"Aunt Angie! how can you be so cruel! As if you ought not to consider yourself the most highly favored of mortals in having me to manage!"

His blue eyes were dancing under his handsome brows, and an unexceptionable golden moustache twitched as he compelled his mouth to remain in grave repose.

Aunt Angie gave a suggestive shrug of her shoulders—neatly turned shoulders too, for all her sixty years—shoulders that were always covered by a white silk shawl folded with exact precision, and pinned just below the low frill of her dress with the same small pearl pin Clarence Caryl could remember from his very babyhood.

"I do manage you very much indeed, don't I, Clarence? I can tell you one thing, however, that unless you want me to put you down as well—as the biggest fool I ever saw—excuse the language, Clarence—you will not break your engagement with Olive Osmond."

"I can't say that I really regard it as my engagement, seeing as I hadn't much to do with making it—nor do I believe Miss Osmond regards the ridiculous agreement her mother made with you, an old school friend, at all binding. Indeed, I am sure if the young lady has the slightest delicacy she will scout the idea of my being engaged to marry her—two people who have never seen each other."

His language was forcible, but his manner was pleasant, and Aunt Angie saw the mirth in his eyes.

"That's all very well, but I can assure you Miss Osmond does regard you as her future husband—an honor you may think very lightly of if you will, for all her fortune of a couple of hundred thousand that for years I have been successful in keeping for you. You must marry her, Clarence—policy, prudence and honor all urge you to keep your passive promise to her; and her beauty and refinement surely ought to plead her cause. Do be good, Clarence, and—sensible, and let me rest content that when the 'Marcellus' comes in port to-morrow with Miss Osmond on board, you will lose no time in securing a wife possessed of all the acquirements a man could ask."

"So she's actually on her way! and that letter there announces her coming?"

Clarence looked indifferently at the foreign missive.

"This is the letter that came by the 'Entenous,' and in which Miss Osmond intimates, most delicately, that she hopes her betrothed will be as glad at the prospect of a speedy meeting as she is. I don't see how you can honorably get out of it, Clarence."

He looked solemnly up at the tiny gold stars in the ceiling as he lay with his curly blonde head resting on the palms of his handsome white hands—looked so long and seriously that Miss Caryl's hopes took fresh impetus. Then he turned on one side and she thought, as she looked at the splendid face opposite hers, at the fine, well-developed figure, and thought of all the graces of mind and manner that were the inner adorning of this glorious temple—Aunt Angie thought what a grand destiny it was for the woman whom this young Antinous should woo for his wife, before whom he should bow that proud, stately head.

Clarence cut her enthusiastic reverie suddenly short.

"I believe I am twenty-eight, am I not, auntie?"

"Twenty-eight next second of June. Why?"

He utterly ignored her curious query, and went on, placidly.

"And old enough to do as I please, I suppose?"

Aunt Angie's forehead began to corrugate.

"Not if you persist in throwing away the best chance of your life."

He smiled serenely.

"Then you think it is dishonorable to deliberately break an engagement of marriage?"

Miss Caryl lighted up eagerly.

"Dishonorable! Clarence, it's outrageous, cowardly, poltroonish. There is no excuse for a gentleman who will plight his troth to a fair, gentle girl, especially a girl of high-bred culture who loves him truly—and then break it for a mere caprice."

She was arguing Olive Osmond's cause as bravely as she could; and Clarence listened complacently, respectfully, and then smiled, showing those perfect teeth of his beneath the heavy, goldenly fringing moustache that he caressed with one white hand.

"Those are my sentiments exactly, aunt Angie. I should regard a man as less than a beast who would break his pledge to a woman who loved and trusted him, whom he loved and trusted. And that is the reason I shall not marry Miss Olive Osmond. I am engaged to Daisy May."

His face was full of quiet determination now, but a sudden gleam of mischievous delight sprang to his eyes as Miss Caryl jumped to her feet, her eyes expressing a thousand times more than her tongue could ever hope to utter.

"Engaged—to—to—Daisy—May?"

"Yes—my fair, pure little snowdrop, with her big brown eyes like wells of crystal water, and her face like a lily-petal, so fair and—"

A gasp of undisguised disgust and disdain from the lady, brought his enthusiasm to a sudden halt.

"You great fool, you, Clarence Caryl! Bear this one thing in mind: you don't bring that little beggar here. And poor, dear Olive coming to-morrow, and—oh, dear, what a born fool you are!"

Her black silk dress fairly quivered with rage as she sailed majestically out of the room, leaving the master of the situation to his own thoughts, that must have been delightfully pleasant, judging by the tender smile that lingered on his mouth, and the proud, brave joy that was in his handsome eyes.

"My darling little Daisy! As if you are not a fortune in yourself that I consider myself blessed to have won!"

And while Aunt Angie was trying to walk off her anger and disappointment in the room above, Clarence Caryl sauntered out into the street and toward a little frame cottage where Daisy May had boarded for two months, ever since she had come, a stranger and a music-teacher, to the little town where Miss Caryl lived in the grand house on the river-bank, and where she had so effectually succeeded in winning Clarence Caryl's heart, despite the fortune and the heiress to be had simply for the asking.

She was a dainty little darling—a very "daisy," her proud lover often told her, as he held her little snowflake of a hand, and looked such unutterable things in her brown eyes—such love that made her heart almost break from its precious burden of happiness.

A true, loyal, womanly girl, that Aunt Angie would have idolized had she only known her and been able to estimate her without prejudice; a refined, well-educated girl, with a sunny, joyous disposition, that was one of her chief charms—that was mirrored in her face and in her manner as she greeted him in Mrs. Maxson's little parlor.

"Clarence! I am so glad to see you. Can you wait only a very few minutes while I finish little Amy Hoar's lesson? Of course you'll wait."

But to-day, Clarence was not so gay as usual; and Daisy noted a deeper tenderness in his manner and tone as he took her in his arms and kissed her.

"I'll wait, dear; but I shall never for you again to finish or give a music lesson. I have come to tell you you must consent to our marriage at once—to-day, my darling. When you come back from Amy, I will tell you."

Her face paled under his intense regard and language, but she only looked a second at him, and answered very gently:

"Wait one moment, Clarence, please."

She was gone a brief time, then he saw Amy Hoar trot past the window; and then Daisy came in, her cheeks flushed the delicious tint of a wood rose, and her eyes shining with some great inner glory.

"I sent Amy home—such a revelation as you made need not wait for a child's unfinished scales. Clarence, dear, what is it? Or—may I tell you that I have heard Miss Osmond will be here to-morrow, at the Bridge House?"

Her clear, pure eyes met his so bravely, so tenderly.

"Daisy, darling, Miss Osmond is coming to-morrow, and that is why I have said what I have. You know all the truth concerning Miss Osmond and I—that I never shall marry her—that I shall have only you for my wife. Tell me you are ready to come to me, Daisy."

His passionate pleading thrilled her from head to foot.

"I am ready, Clarence. Only—is it right for me to stand in the way of this good luck offered you? Ought I allow you to saddle yourself with a poor wife when a rich one is waiting for you? Clarence, much as I love you, truly as I know you love me, I will not lay a straw in your way if there is the slightest regret on your part."

He stopped her mouth with kisses.

"Daisy, there is but one regret, and that is, that we are not already married. See to it that you do not lay the shadow of a straw in the way. To-morrow, when Miss Osmond comes, you must be my wife. It will be the surest, sweetest, quickest way to settle the affair."

He went away shortly, and Daisy watched him down the street, her whole heart in her bonny, wistful eyes.

"My grand, kindly lover! my noble, splendid darling! Heaven make me competent to deserve this sacrifice at his hands!"

And she went softly in, a quiet bliss on her fair, pure face that augured well for Clarence Caryl's happiness.

The cozy breakfast table, with its covers for two, and its snowy damask sweeping to the carpet, its silver and china and crystal, its burden of steaming, fragrant Java, hot, delicious biscuit, snowy eggs, and tempting steak, made a very desirable picture that cool winter morning, to which Clarence Caryl's handsome, rather eager countenance lent added charm, as he took his seat opposite Miss Angie's stern face.

A sealed letter lay beside Miss Caryl's plate; and she opened it while Clarence cut scientific slices of portebousses.

"I presume you will have the goodness and the courtesy to take me to call on Miss Osmond at noon. She has arrived and has sent for me."

Ice itself could not have excelled in frigidity Miss Caryl's tone and manner, but Clarence's answer was debonair as usual.

"Certainly, auntie mine. The brougham shall be at the door at twelve, sharp. Shall you bring Miss Osmond home for a visit?"

Aunt Angie's lips compressed more tightly than ever.

"If I did not dread the mortification of having you meet, I would."

"There is nothing to fear on that score. I shall take the two-forty train for Washington to be absent a fortnight. Some steak, auntie?"

The breakfast was gotten over somehow; by Miss Caryl grimly, in view of her disap-

pointment and disgust; by Clarence, as one would imagine, considering that it was his wedding day; there remained three hours before noon, which Miss Angie employed suitably, of course, and which Clarence occupied in driving Daisy May to the parsonage and marrying her, and in securing railway tickets and telegraphing to the Arlington for rooms.

"I will come for you at two, my darling—you will be in readiness?"

She had looked at him with such proud tenderness in her eyes, and smiled at his eager, handsome face.

"Rather promise me that the interview with Miss Osmond will not make you forget me."

He drew up his brows comically. "I hope not, Mrs. Caryl!"

Then he drove off in good time to escort Miss Angie into the waiting brougham, that in a very few minutes set them down at the ladies' entrance to the Bridge House.

"Shall I go up with you, auntie, or would you prefer to go up alone?"

"I wish you to accompany me, and let me see your chagrin when you see for yourself what a charmingly lovely girl you have so cruelly slighted. She sent me her photograph in a second note this morning, that I might know her when I saw her, and I never saw such a perfect face in my life."

Clarence smiled gently.

"I do hope you'll console her, auntie, and introduce her to Thorn Ridgely, or Barry Cleve, or some of the fellows, while I'm gone."

They were at the door, and the waiter knocked, to be answered by a low, sweet voice, "come in."

Miss Angie walked in, while Clarence followed, to see a tall, elegant girl standing midway of the room, her silken skirt sweeping the floor, her diamonds gleaming, her face alternately flushing and paling as Miss Angie went up and kissed her.

"My dear Olive, my dear child! This is my nephew, Mr. Clar—"

But she paused, as if suddenly petrified; for Clarence, after the one second's hesitation, had caught the girl in his arms.

"Why, auntie, this is Daisy May—I mean Mrs. Clarence Caryl! We were married not two hours ago! Daisy, darling, what does it mean?"

Her voice trembled when she answered.

"Can't you guess? I am Olive Osmond—or rather was, until ten this morning. Clarence, you are not angry! Auntie, you are not angry that I masqueraded a little rather than be married to order!"

And, judging from the magnificent reception a fortnight after in Miss Caryl's grand house, nobody was angry at all.

A Kiss in the Dark.

BY CLIVE MAITLAND.

THE young ladies' seminary at W— had flourished for more than a quarter of a century, and was deservedly popular in that region. Applications for first vacancies were numerous and a hundred happy girls claimed it as home nearly ten months of the year.

The building was of brick and not strictly beautiful in its architecture. The central part had been first built, and as needed, a wing added on either side, so that it presented a particularly broad front.

But the grounds were undeniably fine. A broad walk led from the main entrance down a gentle slope to the large iron gate which seemed to stand guard over the premises. On the right, a fine croquet ground was laid off and amply furnished with balls and mallets, while beyond were shady walks and glimpses of a broad carpet of grass, always temptingly cool and fresh. To the left, a large space was devoted to flowers, and the nicely-kept beds were of every form that ever entered into the heart of man to devise. Time would fail to speak of the stars overspread with verbenas and geraniums, the triangles blushing with pinks, the parallelograms, hexagons, crosses, hearts, etc., *ad infinitum*, radiant with their floral treasures, at once the pride and care of old Tim, the gardener.

One pleasant September afternoon, when the sun was casting glinting shadows on the grass, as it peeped beneath the thick leaves, a carriage stopped before the gate and there alighted, not the usual paternal figure of an anxious father concerned about a daughter, but a handsome young man, who sprang lightly out and, after dismissing the hack, walked leisurely up to the hospitable doors.

His ring brought a tidy servant, and the card he entrusted to her bore the name, Grant Stanmore.

A few moments of waiting and he was shown into the presence of the principal, John A. Parkham, who, as the yearly circulars informed the public, had presided over the institution for nearly twenty years.

He was a portly, keen-eyed man of fifty, and he now rose with outstretched hand to greet the new comer.

"Why, Grant," said he, "this is a pleasant surprise. How are you, my boy? Sit down and I will send for your aunt; and the good man, bustling about, shook hands a second time, and finally settled into his easy-chair still beaming benevolently on his nephew.

Mrs. Parkham came in, a fair, handsome lady, some years the junior of her husband, and who was really tired of roaming about."

"Hardly that," was the reply, "but ready to be content with my uncle and aunt awhile, if I can make myself useful or agreeable."

"Yes, yes," thoughtfully remarked Mrs. Parkham, as he fondly stroked his long beard. "The fact is, you can be very useful to me just now, as I have been disappointed in a tutor who was also to have assisted me as secretary. I can find plenty for you to do if you choose. Jenny," to his wife, "can Grant have the room which Mr. Jackson occupied?"

"I dare say," replied she, "and I will see at once," and she left the room.

But presently she returned with a look of annoyance. "Grant, dear," said she, "would you mind staying to-night up on the second floor? There are a good many girls in the vicinity, but if your nerves are steady you can perhaps exist for one day."

"All right!" laughed Grant. "I may as well accustom myself at once to the confusion of feminine tongues and boots. Aunt, do they all clatter through the hall at one time?"

"I shall not enlighten you in regard to any of their habits," returned she. "You will learn them soon enough."

Here a servant came to say his room was ready, and as he went up stairs, Mr. Stanmore took a mental survey of the situation.

"No. 22, second door from the end of the hall, on the left," said he to himself; "hope I shan't lose my way; the doors all look alike. Perhaps I will have to keep my room and have my meals sent up, for fear of mistakes. Positively never was here before, to my recollection."

But after a while, having refreshed and rested himself, he felt sufficiently bold to venture forth and see his aunt in the cozy parlor where they took their tea. Then a half hour's chat, and Grant, too tired to care for the walk with his uncle, selected a book from the shelves, and having successfully engineered his way to the retirement of No. 22, seated himself near one of the pleasantest windows.

The early autumn days were glorious, and the scene enough to charm an appreciative eye, and Mr. Stanmore gave but half his usual mind to the book he had so carefully selected. As twilight darkened the room he still sat gazing into the gathering gloom, listlessly noting the bell which rung long and loud, the opening of doors, the subdued hum of voices, and the footsteps along the hall.

He was roused from his apathy by the opening of the door behind him, and ere he had fairly collected his wandering thoughts, an arm stole gently about his neck, and a voice whispered:

"Alone again, and in the deserted room? What—?" here she checked herself, and with a start, would have moved but Mr. Stanmore, the spirit of mischief possessing him, caught her hands and rising, said:

"Little comforter, tell me your name; I will pay you for that sweet caress," and stooping quickly, he kissed her.

He heard her breathing short and hard as she struggled to free herself, but she spoke not a word.

Mr. Stanmore held her firmly. "Speak to me," he demanded, "tell me your name."

His prisoner now stood quietly before him feeling her efforts in vain, but she deigned no reply.

"You shall gain nothing by this silence," cried Stanmore, now determined to have his own way. "I will know you when I see you."

Again bending toward her, he bit her soft cheek sharply.

"You make me cruel," he said. "Forgive me, and good-night."

At his rude and unexpected act the girl had uttered a little cry, and as he loosed his hold upon her she lifted one hand and struck him on the cheek, exclaiming through her teeth:

"Never will I forgive! I hate you." Then turned and sped from the room, leaving a bewildered, remorseful man, on whom the glimmering of reason presently dawned.

"A pretty beginning this! wonder whether my good uncle would approve. Well, Grant Stanmore, you're in for it. Perhaps I may as well receive instructions before undertaking anything further. Note: keep my door locked. Any way, it isn't more than half my fault; auntie shouldn't have put a lamb like me up here."

With these and other reflections of a more or less penitential nature, Mr. S. at once betook himself to the study where he found his uncle writing. Looking up, "Ah, Grant," said he, "take a chair; I wish I had your young eyes. How do you like your new quarters?"

To all of which the young man meekly responded, and added: "I shall be glad to have something to do."

The next morning when the school was assembled Mr. Stanmore occupied a seat among the teachers. The only feeling left in regard to last night's adventure was one of deepest chagrin and humiliation. And he could not help an anxious glance among the faces before him, for one in which he thought he could not be mistaken.

Ah! that immense girl in the second row had a little black patch on the left cheek. "She's not the one!" with a realizing sense of the vast proportions. His eyes moving along, rested on a pale, fair girl with long glossy curls, and she, too, wore a black patch on the left cheek. Now, Mr. Stanmore felt sure he had found the right one, but, lo! a row of at least half a dozen girls, each wearing on the left cheek a small black patch.

The perspiration started on his brow. Horrible! had that girl told the story of his folly to all those companions? He was now sure that they eyed him maliciously.

"I am sick!" he groaned, inwardly. "Really I shall have to take the noon train back to New York. This climate does not agree at all with me."

But the calm, grave gentleman who an hour later was introduced to his first class of young ladies, showed no symptoms of his recent disturbance and the pupils at the close of the recitation were duly impressed.

"I know," said Josie Chamberlin, the tall, fair girl who had attracted Grant's attention, "that Prof. Stanmore will frighten me so that I can't recite a word; he looks so severe."

"Fiddlesticks!" elegantly quoth her special chum, Carrie Hadley. "He isn't going to frighten me with his dignity. By the way, hasn't he glorious blue eyes? And I just wanted to run my finger through those beautifully brushed locks, to see them stand up in all their native—a—curliness; that's the proper word, I believe. I wonder what he thought of such a lot of black patches. Queer idea of Floy's, wasn't it?"

"Perhaps he thinks," suggested Josie, "that patches are again in vogue."

"I have a mind," continued Carrie, "to put on two or three more. You know they are said to lighten the beauty of one's complexion, and we may as well improve the week. Should I look as if I were recovering from small-pox?"

Having thought of the thing, Carrie Hadley was just the one to carry out an idea, and it came to pass that patches were a notable feature at the W— seminary for the next week.

"Aunt," asked Mr. Stanmore, one day, "what is the meaning of the plasters worn so extensively among your young ladies?"

"I cannot tell you, indeed," replied Mrs. Parkham. "The girls are always having some new freak, and I seldom think it wise to notice such things; this will last but a few days. I dare say it is an invention of Carrie Hadley's, the little witch."

October flew by, November blasts spent their force, and Christmas came and went.

During the term, Mr. Stanmore had become part of the school, and was popular and respected among his pupils. Yet the first evening of his stay often arose in mind and he was as much puzzled as ever, and time had brought him no opportunity for apology.

Among the teachers was a young lady, who had been a pupil there for several years previously, and as a teacher was not less popular. Miss Rathburn was now, though some of her former schoolmates could hardly help the pet name, Floy, that they had been used to. Her beauty, wit, and pleasant ways had always an attraction for strangers, and Mr. Stanmore had been interested from the first, in the young lady whom he met after he had been in W— some days.

Her first meeting with Prof. Stanmore, under the circumstances related in the beginning of this chapter, of course did not impress her with his dignity or courtesy. But when she had coaxed some of her friends to wear patches for a few days, she had ingeniously concealed

the facts of the story, and had always been so careful to hide her dislike for the popular young professor, that few suspected it. Least of all did Mr. Stanmore himself dream of such a thing, for she had shown not the least bit of coolness, lest any hint might betray her secret. As she met him day by day in the various relations of school life, she could not reconcile her first ideas with those roused by his ever courteous, gentlemanly bearing, and at times this almost led her to suspect him of hypocrisy. But, gradually and unconsciously, she grew more charitable in her thoughts, though still avoiding any really intimate acquaintance. She acquired a habit of watching him, and could not rid herself of a certain interest, that kept growing in spite of her efforts against it.

That their acquaintance did not much improve was certainly not Mr. Stanmore's fault. His first admiration of her had deepened every day, and he had tried to establish a friendship with her. Many a time after he had talked and her into enthusiasm over some subject, and felt complacently victorious, he was surprised to feel all melt away and himself as far off as ever; and all this without any appearance of dislike or avoidance on her part. She was frank, and gay, and sociable, yet just so far could he go, no further. He hardly acknowledged to himself the keen desire that lived and grew in his heart, to win a glance of approval and sympathy from the large gray eyes, so frank, yet so puzzling when he tried to read them.

The pleasant winter went by, and the spring passed with its budding promises of the future. As the warm weather came on, some of the holidays were spent in a beautiful grove, half a mile from the seminary, and one Saturday Mrs. Parkham, Miss Rathburn, and several of the senior pupils, walked out there, accompanied by Mr. Stanmore, whom his aunt had pressed into service.

They rowed across the little lake that lay beyond, and rambled about gathering mosses, and flowers, but finally all sat down, and while resting, some began to weave garlands and crosses, to carry back.

Suddenly Josie Chamberlin, with a cry, put up her hand, exclaiming:

"Oh, I have wounded my cheek with this ugly thorn. Mr. Stanmore, will you take this wreath, just a minute?"

Mr. Stanmore took the flowers, and all were looking earnestly on as Mrs. Parkham examined the hurt, when Josie, half-laughing, said:

"Perhaps I shall have to put a black patch on this till it heals. Girls, do you remember when Floy hurt her cheek last fall, how we each put on a patch? You can return the favor now, Floy."

Florence was sitting nearly opposite Mr. Stanmore, with her lap full of flowers, and as this unlucky speech fell upon her ears, she sat paralyzed, a burning blush mounting to her forehead. Of course it was a revelation. Just once Grant looked at her, a keen, swift glance, and feeling his own face flush hotly, he rose and went in quest of some flowers which he particularly wanted. Inwardly he was confounded, and knew that he must at once act on his newly-acquired information, yet wished his confession had to be made to some other than Florence Rathburn.

That evening he sent word to her, that if she were at liberty, he would particularly like to see her in the parlor. Florence had felt that it must come, and summoned all her courage to endure what she knew would be an embarrassing interview. She soon went down, and as she entered the room where Mr. Stanmore was waiting as patiently as might be, he rose and came toward her.

"Miss Rathburn," said he, trying to speak calmly, "please sit down, and listen kindly to me for a few moments."

She mechanically took the offered seat, but he stood near her, and spoke rapidly.

"I cannot sit again in your presence till I have tried to exculpate myself for an act of rudeness, which I should have atoned for, if possible, long ago. I owe you a most humble apology, and offer it most willingly. What shall be my sentence, Miss Florence?"

His voice trembled, and he actually felt like a culprit before his judge. And no merciful judge did Florence look, as in a cool tone, perhaps tinged with sarcasm, she replied:

"Mr. Stanmore, of course, must receive the pardon he seeks so promptly. Pray, consider the apology sufficient. Is there anything further?"

She rose as she spoke, and stood with her head thrown a little back, her eyes bright, and her cheeks suspiciously red, considering her frigid manner. Grant looked at her for a moment, his blue eyes gathering fire, and putting out